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A CONTRIBUTION TO THE DISCUSSION ON VIETNAM

by Gus Horowitz

Four important disagreements have arisen in the Fourth International concerning the Indochinese revolution. They are over the following questions:

- 1) Over assessing the significance of the accords;
- 2) Over the validity of our principled support to Vietnamese self-determination and our principled opposition to coalition governments with capitalists;
- 3) Over our characterization of the Vietnamese Communist Party;

- 4) Over Trotskyist policy in the antiwar movement.

As of this date, neither the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency nor the Maitan-Mandel-Frank tendency have submitted official tendency positions on these questions. So it is possible that supporters of one or another tendency may differ somewhat among themselves on these questions. However, the main lines of difference are clear.

Leading comrades of the Maitan-Mandel-Frank tendency have expressed themselves in written form in the "Sterne-Walter Resolution on Vietnam" passed by a majority at the December 1972 IEC (IIDB, volume X, no. 6) and in "The Debate on Indochina" by Comrade Sterne (IIDB, volume X, no. 7) as well as in other documents dealing with Indochina or the antiwar movement among other topics, and in public statements such as the book by Pierre Rousset entitled, *Le Parti Communiste Vietnamien* [The Vietnamese Communist Party]. The political resolution of the Internationalist Tendency within the SWP, entitled "The Building of a Revolutionary Party in Capitalist America," (SWP Discussion Bulletin, volume 31, no. 18) echoes many of the same themes and expresses some of the same errors in an even clearer fashion.

On the other hand, leading supporters of the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency have stated their opinions in documents such as the "Motion on Vietnam" submitted to the December 1972 IEC by Adair, Hans, Juan, Pedro, State-man, and Thérèse (IIDB, volume X, no. 6) and "An Evaluation of the December 1972 IEC Plenum" by Jack Barnes (IIDB volume X, no. 9) as well as in other documents.

It is therefore not unreasonable to expect that the two major tendencies in the Fourth International will confront each other as tendencies along the above clearly discernible lines.

For us in the SWP, much of this is not new. We have discussed these questions before and have established our line.

The basic lines of our policy in the antiwar movement were established back in 1965, when the movement first began to grow significantly in response to Johnson's escalation; and our line was reaffirmed repeatedly in succeeding years at conventions and plenums. While our antiwar policy was geared to the specific conditions of American politics at this particular time, it was rooted in the past policies of the American Trotskyist movement and its predecessors, and in the traditions of the international Marxist movement.

Our attitude of opposition to coalition governments with capitalists in Vietnam or elsewhere is not new either. It flows from the long-standing Marxist position on this question that was established even prior to the Russian revolution. Similarly for our principle of support to the right of the Vietnamese to self-determination. To be quite frank, it is rather shocking to see these principles being questioned or treated lightmindedly within the Fourth International.

On the Vietnamese Communist Party, too, the world Trotskyist movement has had a long-established position. From the time of Trotsky on, the Fourth International had held the position that it was in theory and practice a Stalinist party. Now, however, this view has been explicitly challenged.

The discussion generated over assessing the meaning of the accords is, of course a new discussion. This discussion is linked with the very important question of assessing the turn in the international situation that has been signalled by the detente between Washington and Moscow and Peking. While this discussion does not involve a matter of principle, it is closely tied to the analysis of the Vietnamese Communist Party and our attitude to coalition governments with capitalists. The differences on this question can have some very important practical implications. But we can expect that events themselves will fairly quickly prove whether or not the accords represent a victory or a setback to the Indochinese revolution.

In this article, I will discuss only the first two questions enumerated above. Several other comrades have discussed the questions concerning the nature of the Vietnamese Communist Party and the policy of Trotskyists in the antiwar movement. In particular, comrades can refer to the article by Geoff Mirelowitz entitled "A Contribution to the Debate on Indochina: The SWP's Role in the Antiwar Movement" (Bulletin No. 16); to the article by Stephen Bloom entitled "The Basis of the International Discussion on Vietnam" (Bulletin no. 5); the article by George Johnson entitled "The Differences Over Vietnam" (Bulletin no. 25); the article by Fred Feldman, entitled "The 'Internationalist Tendency' Is Revising Trotskyism on the Class Nature of the State and on the Nature of Stalinism" (Bulletin no. 24); and the article by Stephen Bloom, entitled "Vietnam: A Major Challenge to Our Program" (Bulletin No. 28). Perhaps additional articles will have appeared by the time this has too.

I. *The Meaning of the Vietnam Accords*

The Sterne-Walter resolution on Vietnam that was adopted by a majority at the December 1972 plenum of the IEC characterizes the Vietnam accords as representing an advance for the revolution, although not guaranteeing its success. Comrade Sterne's personal contribution reaffirms this position and attempts to explain this assessment, while also attempting to refute the contrary view.

Comrade Sterne's analysis of the present relationship of class forces in Indochina is not only wrong, but self-contradictory. Let us consider some of his arguments.

Comrade Sterne accuses us of starting off "from a reduction of the relationship of forces to its international side alone" and points out that "while the international relationship of forces has in fact *deteriorated* and is *relatively* unfavorable, the relationship of forces in Indochina itself . . . has evolved *positively* in recent months as it has in recent years." (IIDB, volume X, no. 7 page 6. His emphasis. This article by Comrade Sterne was written in April 1973.)

First of all, it is simply not true that we have ignored the increasingly favorable advances of the Indochinese liberation fighters vis-a-vis the puppet regimes prior to the accords. In fact, we pointed to *precisely* that fact as the setting for the accords. Our position was summarized by Barry Sheppard in *The Militant* on February 9 and February 16, 1973. He said the following:

"The weakness of Thieu's army was once again revealed in Hanoi's offensive last spring [1972]. . . . Thieu's armies began to crumble and flee before the revolutionary advance. The Nixon administration now admits that only massive U.S. intervention in the form of bombing and the mining of North Vietnamese ports saved the day for Thieu. The offensive again demonstrated that Vietnamization was not enough to preserve the Saigon regime."

But it was not enough to say that. Barry Sheppard went on to round out the estimate:

"Political pressure [by the imperialists] had to be mounted to secure an agreement that would guarantee to Washington's satisfaction that Hanoi's troops could not attack the Saigon army. The alternative, Nixon threatened, would be sustained, massive bombing that would 'wipe out' North Vietnam. . . . Under the combined pressure of Washington's military attack, Moscow and Peking's refusal to provide adequate aid, and political pressure from Moscow and Peking, Hanoi finally accepted the cease-fire accords under terms they had previously rejected. These accords leave the Thieu regime in control of the major cities, keep Vietnam divided, and contain other conditions Washington has forced on the Vietnamese." (Published in the Pathfinder Press pamphlet, *The Meaning of the Vietnam Accords*, page 7.)

This was the background to Washington's deals with Moscow and Peking at the expense of the Indochinese revolution. While it is true that Washington agreed to remove its troops and stop the bombing, and that this was a concession reflecting a failure by Washington to achieve all of its original aims, the *overall* impact of the accords reflected a setback to the revolution. In return for this U.S. concession, Hanoi and the PRG had to give up *more*—including restraining their military operations under threat of renewed U.S. bombing and re-escalated U.S. intervention. The accords signify that the U.S. imperialists do not have an iron-clad guarantee of preserving a capitalist Indochina in the period ahead, but they certainly do feel that they have a better than even chance.

Despite this setback, we do not characterize the accords as a definitive blow to the revolution at this stage. "The next stage in Vietnam will be marked by instability. The

accords reflect the fact that the liberation forces have been unable to achieve national liberation and reunification, and also that they have not been crushed. Two powers continue to exist in South Vietnam—the Saigon regime of the landlords and capitalists, and the liberation forces based upon the peasants and workers. Such a situation is inherently unstable. One or the other of these forces must eventually predominate. The outcome can only be decided by struggle." (Sheppard, page 7.)

One of the key factors in determining the outcome, of course, is the nature of the Vietnamese Communist Party leadership. Our estimation that it is a Stalinist leadership reinforces our estimate that the situation has become more unfavorable, because we cannot have confidence that the Vietnamese CP will do everything possible to advance the socialist revolution. To the contrary, its inclination will be to make unwarranted concessions to the procapitalist forces. Hanoi's portrayal of the setback as a great victory, its involvement in secret deals over Laos and Cambodia, and its reaffirmation of its goals as precluding socialist revolution in the South at this stage, lend disquieting confirmation of this view.

Comrade Sterne and the Sterne-Walter resolution, on the other hand, look with confidence to the Vietnamese CP as a non-Stalinist leadership determined to do everything possible to advance the socialist revolution. The Sterne-Walter resolution says that "the balance of the last fifteen years clearly demonstrates this party's tenacious commitment to the overthrow of the bourgeois state in South Vietnam." (Page 23, IIDB, vol. X, no. 6.) This view reinforces their optimistic assessment of the meaning of the accords.

Comrade Sterne and the Sterne-Walter resolution see the decisive point in the accords to be the withdrawal of U.S. troops and the end of the massive U.S. bombing of the North. This colors their view of the background to the accords. For example, the Sterne-Walter resolution pictures the accords as stemming from an initiative by Hanoi and the PRG "to win through negotiations a withdrawal of imperialist troops from Vietnam." This places the emphasis wrongly. The accords stemmed primarily out of the pressure of imperialism on the revolution, and not the other way around.

The U.S. had to make concessions, reflecting the failure of its attempt to win a crushing victory, and it had to give up the hope of rolling back the workers state in the North. But greater concessions in the given situation were wrung from Hanoi and the PRG. This explains the almost universal opinion in U.S. capitalist circles that the terms of the settlement were, as the *Wall Street Journal* put it, "quite favorable" and that the U.S. had attained its "minimum objectives." Or, put more crudely by the ultraconservative *New York Daily News*, "In essence, Hanoi accepted the proposal Nixon made last May 8, when he ordered intensified bombing of North Vietnam and mining of northern harbors."

Newsweek magazine said that Nixon "hung tough, and although in the end the President had to give a little too, he managed to wring more concessions from Hanoi than even the most ardent supporters of his war policy have thought would be possible." The *Christian Science Monitor* said that the settlement "is not as satisfactory as successive American presidents probably would have liked,"

but viewed the settlement with favor because it "preserves a non-Communist government in South Vietnam. There is a fair chance that some kind of non-Communist government—although not necessarily president Thieu's—will survive in that tortured land." (For a roundup of bourgeois press opinion see *Intercontinental Press*, November 6 and November 13, 1972, and February 5, 1973.)

These views seem to represent the consensus of bourgeois opinion, not only in the United States, but throughout the world. Are the capitalists all deluding themselves? Perhaps. But given their near unanimous estimate, and the international breadth of their consensus, the burden of proof would seem to be on Comrade Sterne.

It is true that Moscow and Peking have hailed the accords as a victory. But they would have said so in any case. And a "victory" in the eyes of Moscow and Peking means a victory for peaceful coexistence, and need not have anything at all to do with whether the socialist revolution has registered an advance.

Hanoi has also hailed the accords as a big victory. But we should not forget that they spoke in the same terms about the Geneva agreements, which are very similar to the present accords, but which our movement regarded as including unwarranted concessions. Furthermore, Hanoi's concept of victory does not at all include the conditions that Trotskyists consider essential for such a characterization.

For revolutionary Marxists, the problem of assessing the accords as a victory or a setback is not reducible to the question of whether direct U.S. intervention is eliminated. The central question for us is whether the social revolution is advancing. In this regard, Hanoi's assertion of victory must be viewed in the light of its other statements, such as the one on March 6, 1973, by Pham Van Dong, the premier of the DRVN. He hailed the accords as a "great victory" saying that they created favorable conditions "to build socialism in the DRVN and to improve the living standards of our people." But for southern Vietnam, his point was the following:

"I re-emphasize the objective in South Vietnam is to fulfill the national democratic revolution, not the socialist revolution. When people said we want to press a communist administration on South Vietnam they spoke stupidly. It is clear that our perspective is this: the construction of socialism in North Vietnam and the successful realization of the national democratic revolution in South Vietnam will, step by step, lead toward the peaceful reunification of our country." (Quoted by Joseph North in Hanoi, published in the American Stalinist *Daily World*, March 7, 1973.)

In this light, we can understand the consensus of opinion among Nixon, Thieu, Brezhnev, Mao, and Pham Van Dong—all hailing the accords as a victory, while at the same time agreeing that its likely effect in the immediate future will be the preservation of capitalist property relations in the South. For capitalists or Stalinists this is perfectly consistent with the assessment of victory. But for Marxists, it is not.

Comrade Sterne and the Sterne-Walter IEC resolution take the contrary view. Comrade Sterne's summary assessment of the accords is as follows: "The U. S. A. finds itself deprived of the use of its main offensive instrument in Vietnam—the direct military intervention of its forces (although

the B-52 bombers are still intervening daily in Cambodia). At the same time the revolutionary forces remain intact and can wield a powerful offensive weapon—the political struggle of the masses (see further on). *It is in this sense, that the January 27 accords mark an imperialist retreat.*" (Page 7, his emphasis.)

What about Thieu's massive army, financed and equipped by U.S. imperialism, and in control of the cities? Comrade Sterne disposes of this problem with the back of his hand: "How can anyone think that the puppet army can do tomorrow what it failed to do yesterday when it had the 550,000 men of the U.S. expeditionary force and American air and naval cover?" (Page 7.)

This would be reassuring, *provided* that we could be confident that the Vietnamese CP leadership was preparing to continue and intensify the revolutionary struggle. But there is no indication of this. To the contrary, the indications are that they are preparing for a stage of demobilization, as one of the conditions forced upon them, and the main reason why the imperialists could agree to withdraw troops and stop the bombing.

Strangely enough, Comrade Sterne's own article is very contradictory on this point. He says ". . . the Vietnamese fighters had to agree to suspend their general military offensives before the Thieu regime was definitely destroyed" (page 7). He says that while they have maintained their forces, ". . . the Vietnamese have in fact agreed to suspend their military offensives as the price they had to pay for a halt in the escalation. . ." (page 8). He says that "a general offensive by the revolutionists would probably enable Nixon to relaunch the escalation today" and that "the Vietnamese fighters have sought and still seek to avoid a head-on clash with the Americans (during the withdrawal of their troops) as well as an all-out collision with the puppets" (page 17).

Is it not clear from Comrade Sterne's own words that the Vietnamese liberation forces felt compelled to dampen the military struggle considerably? Must we not assess the withdrawal of U.S. forces in that context? Comrade Sterne seems to miss the connection.

Comrade Sterne himself says that although the military struggle will subside, the Vietnamese liberation struggle will now advance to the *political* struggle and the struggle for the cities. Although he does not say so explicitly, he implies that the military demobilization will have little effect on the political struggle. This is certainly open to question.

The Sterne-Walter resolution correctly outlines a series of immediate issues around which the potential for political struggle exists. But the resolution goes on to assert confidently: "All indications are that the cadres of the NLF and the Vietnamese CP are systematically preparing the South Vietnamese population for this mass political struggle" (page 23).

If only it were true. But if it were the case, it would imply an immediate and escalating confrontation with the Thieu regime—militarily as well as politically—a confrontation that would go far beyond the framework of the accords. It would mean that the Vietnamese CP was preparing to take the initiative in *breaking* the accords. This conflicts with its hailing of the accords as a victory, and its stated goal to fight for the *implementation* of the accords, which include limitations on the inextricably com-

bined political and military struggle.

To the contrary. It seems likely that the Vietnamese CP leadership is faced with a different problem. The Thieu regime, backed up by Washington, is already moving quickly to implement those central provisions in the accords that are to its advantage, while systematically violating the contrary provisions—for example, its stalling on freeing the political prisoners and its military operations to win back some PRG-held territory. It already appears that the Vietnamese CP will be faced more and more with the problem of how far to respond to the initiatives of the Thieu regime. This was to be expected, of course, and is strikingly similar to the situation after the 1954 Geneva agreements.

Furthermore, in regard to the prospects for political struggle, Comrade Sterne's own words do not buttress his optimistic view.

—"Active before 1968 and in 1969-70, the urban movement has been paralyzed since the election of Thieu as president and subjected to an all-embracing and ferocious repression. The accords by themselves will not loosen this vise of repression; they only favor the emergence of a mass political struggle capable of confronting it" (page 17). But how?

—"... the repression remains, and aside from the improbable case of the Saigon regime progressively disintegrating, the puppet apparatus will break down only when confronted with a social and military force that needs to be prepared in order to act" (page 17). But the latter, Comrade Sterne has just finished explaining, has to be held back for fear of renewed U. S. escalation.

—"While we cannot hope—aside from an exceptional case—to see the apparatus of the Saigon regime break up without a military offensive and/or an insurrectional uprising, we cannot expect either to see a progressive development of the urban movement unless the repressive apparatus begins to come apart" (page 18). ?!?!?

I assume that Comrade Sterne is not so foolish to think that the Thieu regime and U. S. imperialism will really live up to the provisions in the accords for loosening the repression. His argument seems to boil down to reassuring us that the PRG's consolidation of the rural liberated zones and its promise of renewed political work in the cities despite the pervasive repression are decisive. It is on slim grounds like these that he bases his claim that the accords must be viewed as an advance for the revolution.

His optimism seems a little less than authoritative, when one notes how he repeats several times in his article that the struggle may prove very long-lasting indeed. In this regard, at least, Comrade Sterne's article, written in April 1973, is a little more cautious than the Sterne-Walter resolution passed by a majority of the IEC in December 1972.

The Sterne-Walter resolution, for example, said that the revolutionary offensive in Vietnam will develop along lines "that make an interruption in the political struggle less than likely" (page 22). And shortly afterward, on January 21, 1973, by a majority vote, the United Secretariat passed a motion saying that despite any concessions that the Vietnamese may have had to make to imperialism, and despite the inadequate international support, these "in no way undermine the capacity of the rev-

olution to maintain its momentum in South Vietnam." (*Intercontinental Press*, February 5, 1973.)

Statements like these seem more like revolutionary bragadocio than serious analysis by a leadership body of the Fourth International. Perhaps as time goes on the reality of the setback in Indochina will introduce a little more realism into the analyses made by supporters of the Sterne-Walter position on Vietnam.

In any case, as events unfold we should see more definitive confirmation of what they signify. I would be happy to be proved wrong, but I am afraid that the assessment of the accords as a setback will be proved correct.

Another important question closely tied to any analysis of the meaning of the Vietnam accords is that of our assessment of the detente itself. Implicit in the Sterne-Walter analysis is a gross underestimation of the magnitude of the betrayal by Moscow and Peking, and the capacity and willingness of the Stalinist regimes to repeat this betrayal in other areas of the world.

Comrade Sterne raises the question: "At a deeper level, there may be a difference in our estimation of the relationship of forces now prevailing between the world revolution and counterrevolution" (page 6).

We do not hold the opinion that a decisive shift has taken place on a world scale to the advantage of the counterrevolution. But the detente does imply that the competition between Moscow and Peking to gain favors with imperialism will lead them to play a much more open and direct counterrevolutionary role. They will find new ways to use their pressure and influence to the detriment of the world revolution. Vietnam was the first such example. We should not let our solidarity with the revolution blind us to this fact. Revolutionists, and in the first place revolutionists of the Fourth International, will have to contend with this problem, and be aware of it in order to best counteract these counterrevolutionary pressures—in an overall situation in which the class struggle will continue and intensify.

II. Two Questions of Principle

The second important difference is over the question of whether or not it is permissible in principle to lend political support to a coalition government with capitalists or to lend political support to a program that includes concessions to imperialism in violation of the right of self-determination. The long-established Marxist position has been principled opposition to such policies. By principled opposition we mean that our theory shows and the experience of history has proved that there are no circumstances whatsoever in which a coalition government with capitalists can benefit the socialist revolution. Similarly for bending the principle of support to the right of nations to self-determination. All experience has shown that such developments, no matter what tactical justifications are advanced to rationalize them, mislead the working class, and put a roadblock in the path of the revolution—even given the best relationship of forces. It would require the utmost care in analysis and firm proof before we could consider altering such well tested and validated principles. The price for a mistake would be too high.

We have always assumed that there was clarity on this point in the Fourth International. But now it has been called into question.

Differences on this issue first arose around the question of the seven-point program of the PRG, which includes the provision for a coalition government with the capitalists. On October 21, 1972, the Central Committee of the Ligue Communiste, following the lead of Comrade Sterne and others, voted overwhelmingly for a resolution deciding to lend political support to this program.

The rationale given in the Ligue resolution was that the "implementation of the principal points of the PRG proposal," especially its first two points calling for an end to direct U. S. intervention and the dumping of the Thieu regime, "would give the PRG power in South Vietnam." The resolution said that the PRG's seven points were flawed and were open to criticism, but in essence they were a diplomatic maneuver designed to offer the American imperialists a face-saving compromise "to hide the size of its defeat from the eyes of the world." For these reasons, the Ligue resolution concluded that "we must popularize the proposals put forward in the negotiations and demand that a positive response be made to them. This is how our support for the seven points must be understood. We show in this way that our support of the Indochinese revolution is unconditional but not uncritical." The resolution, to be sure, also said that "we don't center our activity around support for the PRG's seven points, but rather around the slogan 'total support until the final victory.' That's also why we fight for the immediate withdrawal of all U. S. forces from Indochina without regard to the dates and extensions put forward by the PRG." (Translated from the French. All emphasis in the original.)

This position is dead wrong on two counts:

1. It violates the principle of uncompromising support to Vietnamese self-determination. We cannot support concessions wrung from the Vietnamese by imperialism—even if these are concessions that the Vietnamese felt they had to make, even if a revolutionary Marxist leadership would have had to make big concessions, and even if it were true that they were only concessions designed to enable the imperialists to save face in defeat.

We recognize that the Vietnamese fighters, who are the ones subjected to imperialist murder and Stalinist treachery, may well have had to make concessions of one or another kind. But revolutionary Marxists, especially in other countries, and particularly the Fourth International as a whole, can never lend credence in any way to the idea that the imperialists have the right to extract such concessions. Our task is to call for the immediate and complete end to all forms of imperialist intervention in Vietnam, and for support to the right of the Vietnamese people to self-determination.

No tactical arguments can override these political considerations. Furthermore, it is simply not true that lending support to a program that includes concessions to imperialism gives greater aid to the revolution than sticking to principled support to the right of the Vietnamese to self-determination. Demanding that the U. S. accept the PRG's negotiating position is neither more militant nor more beneficial to the revolution than demanding that the U. S. withdraw immediately and totally.

The Ligue Communiste Central Committee resolution

also made a grave error in confusing support to the Indochinese revolution with support to the inadequate program put forward by its leadership.

2. It violates principle to call for support to a program that includes the provision for a coalition government with capitalists, as the PRG program does.

Our task, as Trotskyists, is to educate the masses about the fact that such a coalition is an obstacle. Even if the PRG's seven points had been accepted by Washington, the transformation to a workers state would not have been automatic. (It wasn't automatic in Algeria, in China, or in Cuba.) A great obstacle yet to overcome would have been the presence of capitalist functionaries in the government and the still existing, though weakened capitalist state apparatus. It would not have been an insurmountable obstacle, of course, but it would have been an obstacle nonetheless. And the Stalinist program of the Vietnamese CP leadership would not have been helpful in overcoming such an obstacle.

During the debate on this question within the Ligue Communiste Central Committee, Alain Krivine put forward an amendment which was politically weak, but at least headed in the right direction. His amendment stipulated that the Ligue Communiste did not support the seven-point program of the PRG in its totality, especially the provision calling for a government of national concord. His amendment was supported by a significant part of the Political Bureau, including Pierre Frank. But it was defeated overwhelmingly: 6 for, 46 against. This one-sided vote can only testify to the terrible miseducation on this principled question that must have prevailed in the Ligue Communiste for a long time.

This confusion and miseducation on principle persisted and deepened when the accords were first announced on October 26, 1972, with provisions for even more concessions by the Vietnamese. When Thieu and Nixon then held out for even more, the Ligue Communist leadership raised the demand that Washington "sign now" ("Nixon must give in"). Rather than focusing on the principled demand for immediate and total U. S. withdrawal, and refuting Washington's self-proclaimed right to extract concessions from the Vietnamese, the Ligue Communiste raised a demand that implicitly accepted the legitimacy of these imperialist imposed accords! The immediate withdrawal demand, however, was not only principled, but in the given situation would have helped put the most pressure on imperialism to retreat.

The leadership of the SWP was very concerned by these developments and determined to support initiatives at the upcoming IEC meeting to clarify the principled questions involved. Given the importance of the issue, it was a test of the leadership capacity of the IEC to help the Ligue Communiste leadership correct its error.

At the IEC a very brief motion was introduced by Comrades Adair, Hans, Juan, Pedro, Stateman, and Thérèse—a minority of the United Secretariat. Their motion dealt with this question of principle in the context of the nine-point accords, which had been announced in the meantime, but were not yet signed. The motion included the following two points:

- "The program of the Provisional Revolutionary Government includes the call for a coalition government—that is, a government including bourgeois forces—in South

Vietnam. The Fourth International differentiates itself from any support to the call for a coalition government. As differentiated from the program of the PRG, the Fourth International projects its own program of democratic demands and transitional demands, in accordance with the theory of permanent revolution, to carry out the democratic and socialist tasks of the Indochinese revolution. . . .

"We are opposed to any conditions forced upon the Vietnamese in the current negotiations. We will support no demands, such as 'sign the nine-point agreement' (directed against Washington), involving support of conditions that violate the right of the Vietnamese people to self-determination and that constitute obstacles in the path of the revolution." (IIDB, volume X, no. 6.)

This resolution was very brief and was designed to call for a vote on only these fundamental principles. It deliberately did not include a political assessment of the present situation or of the nature of the Vietnamese Communist Party. These latter points were taken up in Comrade Statemen's oral report, which was submitted to a separate vote. We had hoped that the IEC would pass this resolution, even if it defeated Comrade Stateman's report or passed additional resolutions including other points. There would have been nothing contradictory about the IEC majority supporting this principled resolution, while still adhering to the political assessment that the accords were favorable for the revolution or that the Vietnamese Communist Party was not Stalinist. We could then have had a debate over these other questions, while achieving clarity on principles. This would have helped correct the error of the Ligue Communiste. But this principled resolution was defeated by the IEC majority! The resolution that was passed by a majority of the IEC, including comrades from both sides of the dispute in the Ligue Communiste, deliberately sidestepped

the issue of principle. The Sterne-Walter resolution on Vietnam did state its "principled opposition to any coalition government with the bourgeoisie," but it did not take a stand on whether or not it was permissible to lend support to the nine points of the accords, which included a provision for just such a coalition government. And, Comrade Sterne, co-author of the IEC majority resolution, reiterated in his oral presentation that he thought it was correct to lend political support to the PRG's seven-point program and the nine-point accords, and to call for "sign now" as a key demand of the antiwar movement.

Thus, the IEC majority failed in its responsibility to introduce clarity—i.e., political leadership—and instead helped foster confusion and miseducation on this question. The confusion and miseducation persists to this day. This is clearly illustrated in Comrade Sterne's contribution to the IIDB, written in April 1973. On pages 15-16, in his section entitled "The Debates in the Majority," he points out that some of the supporters of the IEC resolution on Vietnam did not support the "sign now" demand. He says that this difference merely reflected a minor difference in antiwar *tactics* or in analysis of the relationship of forces. And he argues that a question of principle is not even involved!—he calls such talk abstract. Thus this Marxist principle—i.e., an ABC for our movement because it is a lesson learned and reaffirmed through the experience of decades and decades of working-class struggle—is casually given the back of the hand by the co-author of the resolution passed at the last IEC.

It is ironic that this is the position of a comrade who berates the SWP for our alleged refusal to advance slogans designed to raise the consciousness of the antiwar vanguard. On this question, at least, one of our first tasks must evidently be to raise the consciousness of the majority of the IEC of the Fourth International.

July 23, 1973

ULTRALEFTISM IN THE BLACK MOVEMENT AND THE INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCY'S ADAPTATION TO IT

by Norman Oliver, Lower Manhattan Branch, New York Local

Throughout their document the comrades of the Internationalist Tendency attempt to shore up their arguments by falsifying party history. True to form their section entitled "Black Movement" in Part 3 of their counter-resolution is a pack of lies, slanders, and provides an indication of what their reactionary ideas on nationalism would mean for the party's work in this movement.

The Internationalist Tendency (IT) criticizes the party for giving "uncritical support" to the Black Panther Party in its "nationalist phase." Perhaps even more disturbing to the IT was our party's criticism of the BPP's "turn to Marxism-Leninism" and away from nationalism. The IT has this to say: "The fact that there were elements supporting Maoism and guerrillism, and that the Peace and Freedom Party was not THE revolutionary party, should not be used to mask the fact that the Panthers

had taken a progressive turn in introducing 'Marxism Leninism,' however distorted, into the Black community, and in taking the difficult step of beginning alliances with ostensibly revolutionary, predominately white organizations." It's enough to make you sick.

We criticized the BPP's alliance with Peace and Freedom not on the basis that PFP was "ostensibly revolutionary" nor because it was predominantly white, but because PFP was a petty-bourgeois party aspiring to become a third *capitalist* party. The Panthers' alliance with this party was a step away from independent political action; a step towards the bourgeois swamp of the Democratic and Republican parties. The recent Seale campaign in Berkeley is a culmination of this "progressive turn."

To say that the "Marxism-Leninism" of the BPP is "distorted" deserves the "Esquire" dubious achievement award

for understatement of the year. The turn the Panthers made was not towards Marxism but to Stalinism. We have always explained that tendencies in the radical movement that adopt a pro-socialist stance must, ultimately, bring themselves toward Trotskyism, Social Democracy, or Stalinism. One has to take sides on the crucial questions of the day and the three main tendencies in the working-class movement have material forces with which they attempt to persuade you of the correctness of their ideas. Needless to say, Stalinism's power rests not only on its ideology, but on the Soviet Union. However, the ideology of Stalinism provides a means, either in its ultra-left or reformist forms, of adapting to bourgeois ideology. It was the ultraleft and Stalinist politics of the BPP that we criticized.

The comrades of the IT then go on to blast the party for being "unable to find ways of participating and initiating struggles in defense of the Black Panthers (except in Seattle)." The IT sites the sectarian attitude of the Panthers as being an insufficient reason for our "near-abstention" from this work. The Panthers' sectarian attitude was so thoroughgoing that they refused any united front type activity with any group which did not agree with them. Wherever we could, the party participated in the defense of the BPP. And through the pages of our press, through our election campaigns, etc., the SWP and the YSA propagandized in defense of the BPP and helped draw the lessons of the Panther experience. The pages of *The Militant* and the *Young Socialist* during 1968 are filled with examples of this. Comrades should look over them.

We are informed by the IT that the party has made no major effort toward intervention in the Black movement. Our work in relation to the League of Revolutionary Black Workers is supposedly an example of this. Since the development of the League and our work with it are probably less known generally than that of the Panthers I will deal with this in a little more detail than with the BPP.

Black workers play a central role in the auto industry as can be seen from the fact that over 33 percent of the 1.5 million members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) are Black. In many plants Blacks are a majority.

In 1968 the struggle against the superexploitation and racist oppression of Black workers found its highest expression in the development of Black caucuses in the UAW in Detroit. This culminated in the formation, at the Dodge Hamtramck Assembly Plant, of the Dodge Revolutionary Union Movement (DRUM). Hamtramck is a sort of internal suburb of Detroit which, being in the center of the city, is surrounded by the Black community.

DRUM was formed in May 1968 following a wildcat strike of Black and white workers protesting speedup on the assembly line. The majority of the workers penalized for their participation in this strike were Black. A general crackdown on Black workers, the majority at the plant, was launched by the lily-white management and supervisory personnel. Black workers were being fired and suspended on any pretext whatsoever. It was in this context that DRUM was formed. It should be noted here that the leadership of this formation came from a group of revolutionary minded Black students who published a newspaper called the "Inner City Voice."

During the months of May, June, and July DRUM, through its publication also called DRUM, documented case after case of racist harassment of Black workers.

In the second week of July DRUM issued a set of demands for the elimination of racism at the Dodge plant. One demand called upon Chrysler to pay South African auto workers the same wage given the Afrikaner auto workers. Other demands called for the installment of 50 Black foremen, 10 Black general foremen, 3 Black superintendents, a Black plant manager, and the rehiring of all Black workers fired on trumped-up charges by racist foremen. Also included as a demand was the stipulation that union dues be channeled towards aiding the struggle for Black self-determination. Comrades will note the nationalist character of these demands.

When the union and Chrysler failed to respond adequately to these demands, DRUM proceeded to shut the plant down. DRUM brought out over 2,000 workers (the work force was 10,000) and picketed on July 12. The strike lasted for two days. Because of the solidarity of the Black workers, not one person was victimized. Although the demands of the strike were not won, this was an impressive show of strength on the part of an organization only three months old.

The next major effort of DRUM was participating in the special election called for September 26. The election was called to fill a vacancy on the Board of Trustees of UAW Local 3 created by the death of one board member. DRUM decided to run Ron March for the vacancy.

At 5:30 p.m. on September 26 it was announced that out of the 27 candidates for the board, Ron March had won. Some Hamtramck cops hearing of this victory went into a frenzied attack on Black workers. At the police station, about 50 Black workers including Ron March were trying to have a meeting with the mayor and the police chief about the police riot when the union bureaucrats began locking doors and the police attacked the group with axe handles. The major and police chief stood by and watched.

Following these attacks, the UAW leadership announced a "run-off" election to be held on October 3. They then sent out a letter to retired workers, mostly white, claiming that if March won, retirement benefits would be cut off. In spite of this policy, out of the 3,000 ballots cast, March lost by only 700 votes—2,091 to 1,386.

In summing up the election campaign, DRUM wrote, "DRUM members are not so narrow minded as to place all their efforts on winning this particular election. DRUM's concern is the liberation of the people. Anything else falls short of the goal. Nothing will be gained, in actuality, by winning the trustee position; your conditions will remain the same. The most important thing that can come out of an election like this is that DRUM will show the power of Black workers and can gain more members who will continue to lead the struggle." That is precisely what happened.

At the Eldon Gear and Axle, Jefferson Assembly, Ford Rouge, and other plants in the Detroit area, RUMs were formed. At some of these plants wildcat strikes were organized (at the Eldon plant for example). These groups from all around the metropolitan area of Detroit combined to form the League of Revolutionary Black Workers.

The Internationalist Tendency claims that we didn't participate in this very important development in Detroit.

That's a lie! We helped organize meetings for DRUM speakers on campus as well as DRUM meetings themselves; we helped to build and participated in picket lines; myself and another comrade worked on the staff of the "Inner City Voice" (which by this time had become the official newspaper of the League); and we launched a major propaganda campaign directed mainly at the Dodge main plant—selling hundreds of *Militants* at plant

What the IT comrades are really criticizing us for is committing the same "mistake" we made with the Panthers—defending Trotskyist politics.

When the League was formed, it was an organization that took up the grievances and demands that arose out of the oppression in the auto plants of Detroit. It posed itself as an alternative to the Reuther bureaucracy. It exposed the auto companies and the union leadership's collaboration with them. It won a wide audience for its ideas.

However, the leadership of the LRBW wanted more without understanding how to go about getting it. This grouping of students and ex-student radicals had set for themselves the goal of constructing a Black "Marxist-Leninist" party. They tried to turn the League into a combination union caucus and cadre organization. It was this syndicalist approach which isolated them from the very workers that had previously supported them.

Black workers who might be interested in fighting around their immediate demands—speed-up, racist hiring practices, around the sixty and seventy hour weeks Blacks are forced to work—could not deal with educationals on Mao's "New Democracy." In their attempt to develop cadre, the leadership of the League was quite successful—they wound up with cadre and nothing else.

The League's turn to "Marxism," like that of the Panthers, was in reality a turn to Stalinism and Mao Tse-tung thought. They, once again, like the Panthers, adopted an extremely sectarian attitude towards other groups and individuals on the left. Members of their organization robbed our bookstore; they physically attacked comrades

selling *Militants* at plant gates because, that was "their turf"; and when we criticized them during the 1969 municipal election for their maneuvers in the Democratic Party they threatened one comrade's life. Are the IT comrades serious when they say we should do more work in groups like these?

The LRBW has since split into a number of different groups. The main part of the group is now in the Black Workers Congress and is part of this Maoist regroupment around the *Guardian*.

When the IT comrades talk about our "abstention" from the Black movement, they are talking about our refusal to get bogged down in the quagmire of Maoism. They are taking us to task for not intervening in the "new mass vanguard"—which in the European perspectives document itself is described as essentially Maoist.

In trying to apply this method of orienting to the "vanguard" to the Black struggle in this country, the IT would have had us adapt to the politics of organizations like the BPP and the LRBW—move away from the program of Marxism—in order to make some shortcut, sure-fire Black recruitment. In actuality this would indicate our being recruited to the "vanguard" and its Stalinism.

By not bending to the pressures of the "new mass vanguard" in the Black struggle we have and will continue to recruit the best Black activists to our movement and train them as cadre. Again we have the example of the League and the BPP. From this experience in Detroit we recruited people who are now national leaders of the YSA (5 are on the National Committee of the YSA). One comrade recruited from the group of people who were to later become the leadership of the LRBW is presently the party's Black work director and on the National Committee.

There is only *one* way to build the party. There are no shortcuts. That method is outlined in the Transitional Program. We must reaffirm the party's adherence to this method and fight for its application on an international scale.

July 24, 1973

THE NATIONAL QUESTION
Setting the Record Straight
on Leninism and Nationalism

by Supporters of the June 10 "Statement of Support
to the International Majority Tendency"

Introduction

A major characteristic of the American working class is the existence of a large Black and Brown population within it. We believe that this has, and will continue to lend a particularly explosive character to the class struggle in the United States. However, we think there has been a definite tendency of the leadership of the SWP to equate nationalism (national ideology) with the national liberation struggles themselves. This is true, not only in regards to the struggles of Blacks and Browns within the U. S., but is also a feature of the SWP leadership's international analysis, as evidenced in the call for a "democratic secular Palestine," their analysis of Bangla Desh, their view of the revolution in Southeast Asia as primarily a national liberation struggle rather than a socialist revolution, etc.

A differentiation must be made between the nationalism of the oppressed and that of the oppressor. We view the *struggles* of the oppressed nationalities against imperialist domination as wholly progressive. However, *nationalism* is a backward and narrow ideology of class unity which stands as a roadblock to the socialist revolution. Therefore, the revolutionary party must defeat the false ideology (nationalism) and the petty-bourgeois and bourgeois misleaders who forward it. Instead, we believe the SWP leadership has entered a process of adaptation to petty-bourgeois nationalism; by refusing to differentiate between the struggle itself and nationalism, the SWP leadership misorients our party.

Because we view the struggles of the oppressed Black and Brown masses as a central feature of the coming American revolution, we feel that our party's practical abstention from these struggles, as well as their theoretical unclarity, involves grave consequences. Therefore, we are offering this contribution to the discussion. It takes up the relationship between the national liberation struggles and the ideology of nationalism, and the role of the revolutionary party, vis-a-vis the national liberation struggle. Although this document focuses on the relationship of our party to the struggles of the nationally oppressed within the borders of the U. S., the debate has even broader implications in the international movement.

The National Question

The national question is, and has always been, a troublesome one for Marxists. Why? Because the striving for national unity and freedom is not—abstractly speaking—related to the proletarian struggle for socialism. It is rather a leftover problem from a past epoch: the epoch of bourgeois revolution. If human history evolved in neat, even, "logical" stages, that is, metaphysically, the resolution of the "national question"—along with all other bourgeois-democratic tasks—would have been fully completed everywhere through the bourgeois revolution, and humanity would be organized in a series of independent, homogeneous nations. We would then face the relatively uncomplicated, though immense task of eradicating cap-

italist social relations and national boundaries, and reorganizing society on social foundations.

But social reality, like all reality, evolves dialectically, not metaphysically. It is not programmed according to preconceived plan, but follows its own laws of uneven and combined development, of paradox and contradiction. Not all peoples arrived at the bourgeois stage simultaneously. Those that got there first generally annexed weaker neighboring peoples by force, and/or conquered and subjugated precapitalist societies all over the world. In addition, national homogeneity was further negated by mass migrations, both voluntary and involuntary.

Consequently the problem of achieving national freedom persists to this day, both in the underdeveloped continents, and in Europe and North America; and this is a source of tremendous instability for world capitalism. This bourgeois-democratic task, therefore, becomes intertwined with socialist aims, and is placed on the agenda of the proletarian revolution. It is this paradox which has generated confusion and conflict within the Marxist movement from the beginning.

Trotsky solved the problem in broad historical terms as one element in the theory of permanent revolution. But it was Lenin who provided the answers to the concrete questions faced by Marxists in dealing with national struggles. His answer—*Support* all struggles for national liberation! *Oppose* all forms of nationalism!—is not a simple one, but neither is the question.

The inability of many socialists to handle this contradiction results in two kinds of errors. Some fail to see the democratic, progressive, objectively anticapitalist content of national struggles, and fall prey to workerist dogmatism. Others, who do see the revolutionary potential of national struggles succumb to the ideology of petty-bourgeois nationalism. We shall demonstrate that the SWP has slid into the latter.

1) *Marxism and Nationalism*

Although this contribution is limited to the national question, this examination of the relation of nationalism to national liberation applies in general to the relation of feminism to women's liberation. They are parallel phenomena.

One of the principal shibboleths of the SWP in recent years is the proposition that nationalism (on the part of oppressed peoples) should be supported, encouraged and advocated by Marxists, and that, indeed, consistent nationalism leads to socialism, i.e., internationalism. The corollary of this is the reverse proposition: consistent Marxists are nationalists, and indeed our Black and Chicano comrades proclaim their "nationalism." One immediate problem is that this can only apply to a select group, while others are excluded. White comrades, obviously, cannot be Black nationalists. This peculiarity alone should make this idea suspect.

The concept that consistent nationalism is consistent with

socialism, and vice-versa, is an entirely new one for the Marxist movement, but an old one among petty-bourgeois nationalists. The "socialist" Zionist movement, for instance was founded on precisely this idea, as expounded by its founder and theoretician, Ber Barachov, more than a half century ago. To be a consistent socialist, he contended, a Jew must be a Zionist, and consistent Zionism must lead to socialism. Other examples are: the Arab Socialist Party, the former Polish Socialist Party, the IRA, etc.

Another brand of nationalist-socialism, or socialist-nationalism, is the Stalinist variety, as in China and Vietnam. Trotskyists have always recognized that the nationalism of these parties is entirely reactionary. The leadership of the Cuban Communist Party, although it evolved from a petty-bourgeois nationalist tendency, was in its first stages less imbued with nationalism, and therefore more inclined to subordinate the interests of the Cuban revolution to the world revolution. In recent years this leadership, which failed to purge itself of its pragmatic petty-bourgeois radical nationalism, has retreated somewhat from its internationalist outlook.

Che, who came the closest to being a consistent internationalist, was not a Cuban at all, let alone a "consistent" Cuban nationalist. He renounced nationality altogether and proclaimed himself a citizen of the world, a patriot of the world proletariat—and that is the standpoint of *all* genuine Marxists.

However, the fact that this idea is new for Marxism doesn't necessarily make it wrong. But serious people, proposing to revise one of the basic principles of Marxism, would have to begin by honestly acknowledging that a revision is being proposed, and then demonstrate that the orthodox position was incorrect, or that circumstances rendered it obsolete.

Sad to say, the party leadership did not proceed that way. Instead, "Marxist nationalism" was smuggled into the party as true Leninism, and Black functionaries were assigned the task of finding verification in the writings of Lenin.

2) *Lenin and Nationalism*

Comrade Tony Thomas undertook to document Lenin's pronationalism—with "extensive quotations"—in the January 1972 issue of the *International Socialist Review*. Reading the article, one readily visualizes Comrade Thomas searching diligently through Lenin's writings, hoping to find at least one solid quotation that clearly establishes Lenin as an advocate of nationalism (for oppressed people). The subheading reads: "Some political groups on the left argue that it is 'Leninist' to oppose all forms of nationalism, including Black and Chicano nationalism in the United States. This documented study of Lenin's writings on nationalism shows why they are wrong." (Pg. 13, *ISR*, January 1972. Emphasis added for reasons that will become evident.)

One reads on fully expecting to find some semblance of evidence. One would expect that out of 30 years of a person's writings, at least some quotations could be found to "prove" almost anything—if only due to careless formulations. But no! For any critical reader, the article is itself a powerful verification of the proposition that Lenin did indeed "oppose all forms of nationalism."

Because after examining all 45 volumes with a magnifying glass, *Thomas was unable to come up with a single solitary quotation in which Lenin advocates, or supports, nationalism, of any kind, by anybody, (let alone proclaims himself a consistent nationalist or pronationalist).*

He found quotations in which Lenin unequivocally supported "revolutionary movements among the dependent and underprivileged nations," "the self-determination of nations" — "bourgeois democratic demands" — struggles "against all national oppression"—"bourgeois democratic liberation movements"—but *none—not one!*—supporting nationalism. Thomas might protest that we are quibbling, that all this adds up to support of nationalism. But why then this strange inhibition against a forthright, outright support to nationalism in so many words? Our party leaders have no such inhibitions. They will unabashedly declare their "love" for nationalism, and proudly claim the prize for being the most ardent and "consistent" nationalists.

Perhaps Lenin never posed the question in that way—for or against nationalism? But he obviously could not possibly have avoided it, nor did he. In fact, he dealt with this question over and over again, directly, unequivocally, even bluntly, as was his style. But these direct answers to the very question posed by Thomas never found their way into his article. Just for a starter:

"Marxism cannot be reconciled with nationalism, be it even of the most 'just,' purest, most refined and civilized brand. In place of *all forms of nationalism Marxism advocates internationalism*, the amalgamation of all nations in a higher unity. . . ." (p. 27, "National Liberation, Socialism and Imperialism." Emphasis added for obvious reasons. All references from Lenin will be from this same pamphlet unless otherwise stated.)

This idea is repeated many, many times.

The political novice might well be confused, by what appears to be a semantic squabble—or a contradiction on Lenin's part. How is it possible to support movements, "against national oppression," "for national liberation," "for national struggles," and be against nationalism?

Bourgeois (or petty-bourgeois) nationalists deliberately confuse and identify the two concepts, in order to infect nationally oppressed masses with the virus of nationalist ideology, i.e., nationalism, and derail their liberation struggles from a consistent anticapitalist, socialist, i.e., *internationalist* course. It is precisely the special responsibility of Marxists to combat this confusion, to clarify the distinctions, to counterpose one to the other, in the sharpest form. This is the main lesson that Lenin drives home, approaching it from every possible angle. In any case, it is utterly impossible to read Lenin on this subject and not be absolutely clear as to where he stands.

Comrade Thomas is no political novice, and could not have missed Lenin's point. He does exactly the opposite of what Lenin does. He quotes Lenin in support of national liberation struggles and then says, "see, Lenin supports nationalism," thus playing upon the inherent potential for confusion, and deliberately reinforcing it.

Lenin explains again and again, the two-sided policy of Marxists toward the national question:

"The International's resolution reproduces the most essential and fundamental propositions in this point of view:

on the one hand, the absolutely direct, unequivocal recognition of the full right of all nations to self-determination; on the other hand, the equally unambiguous appeal to the workers for international unity in their class struggle." (P. 82. Emphasis in the original.)

"Some people profess to see a 'contradiction' in the fact that while point 4 of this resolution, which recognises the right to self-determination and secession, seems to 'concede' the maximum to nationalism (in reality, the recognition of the *right of all nations to self-determination* implies the maximum of *democracy* and the minimum of nationalism), point 5 warns the workers against the nationalist slogans of the bourgeoisie of any nation and demands the unity and amalgamation of the workers of all nations in internationally united proletarian organisations." (P. 84. Emphasis in the original.)

"The principle of nationality is historically inevitable in bourgeois society and, taking this society into due account, the Marxist fully recognises the historical legitimacy of *national movements*. But to prevent this recognition from becoming an *apologia of nationalism*, it must be strictly limited to what is progressive in such movements, in order that this recognition may not lead to bourgeois ideology obscuring proletarian consciousness. (Emphasis added.)

"The awakening of the masses from feudal lethargy, and their struggle against all national oppression, for the sovereignty of the people, of the nation, are progressive. Hence, it is the Marxist's *bounden* duty to stand for the most resolute and consistent democratism on all aspects of the national question. This task is largely a negative one. But this is the limit the proletariat can go to in supporting nationalism, for beyond that begins the 'positive' activity of the *bourgeoisie* striving to *fortify* nationalism (Emphasis in original.)

"To throw off the feudal yoke, all national oppression, and all privileges enjoyed by any particular nation or language, is the imperative duty of the proletariat as a democratic force, and is certainly in the interests of the proletarian class struggle, which is obscured and retarded by bickering on the national question. But to go *beyond* these strictly limited and definite historical limits in helping bourgeois nationalism means betraying the proletariat and siding with the bourgeoisie. There is a border-line here which is often very slight and which the Bundists and Ukrainian nationalist-socialists completely lose sight of.

"Combat all national oppression? Yes, of course! Fight for any kind of national development, for 'national culture' in general?—Of course not." (P. 27-28. Emphasis in the original.)

Unfortunately, the SWP has also lost sight of the border line. What is that line? It is the distinction between the "negative" task of *opposing* any kind of *national* oppression, privilege, or coercion—and the "positive" activity of *favoring*, promoting, fortifying nationhood, national culture, national exclusiveness, etc., i. e., nationalism.

The national question, then, is one aspect of bourgeois-democratic liberation movements. In colonial countries it is generally linked to the struggle for land and political democracy. Marxists support all such struggles critically, without thereby becoming bourgeois democrats. They will bloc with bourgeois nationalists so long as they really

fight for national freedom.

But the cardinal condition for such a bloc is complete ideological independence and freedom to wage ideological struggle against these very allies. This is the principle which the SWP leadership violates. It eliminates the distinction between Marxism and nationalism altogether, and even identifies the two. This constitutes a surrender of the class interests of the proletariat.

3) What Is Nationalism?

What is nationalism? It is an ideology and a movement that arose with the formation of bourgeois national states. It was the intellectual and emotional expression of the objective need to reorganize society into larger social units. The feudal village or duchy were no longer adequate for the expanding productive forces.

The level of the productive forces of our own time demand an end to both private ownership of the means of production and of national boundaries. The ideology that corresponds to modern conditions is proletarian, or socialist internationalism. Nationalism, though a big advance over provincialism in its time, is nevertheless narrow, limited, particularist, and backward as compared to internationalism.

Nationalism both *unites* all members of a given society into a cohesive unit, and *separates* or distinguishes this entity from all others. Thus its tendency is to blunt the class struggle, while sharpening the distinctions among nations. This corresponds exactly to the interest of the capitalist class.

Nationalism is not a scientifically grounded ideology, but a *mystique*. It attributes special, exclusive, unique or superior qualities to one's own nation—its history, its culture, its people, its national characteristics. It is God's chosen people. It comes first.

The inevitable corollary is that other nations come second, are in one way or another inferior, are foreigners, as not part of "us."

All nationalism gives priority to one's own nation and subordinates international to national interests.

Thus nationalism is a powerful obstacle to the development of international class solidarity. That is why Marxists have always been unqualified internationalists and opponents of nationalism "in all forms."

"The proletariat cannot support any consecration of nationalism; on the contrary, it supports everything that helps to obliterate national distinction and remove national barriers; it supports everything that makes the ties between nationalities closer and closer, or tends to merge nations. To act differently means siding with reactionary national philistinism." (Lenin, p. 28.)

4. Marxists and National Liberation Movements

Do internationalists then oppose struggles against national oppression? On the contrary, support for the rights of every people to national freedom, including the right to national independence, opposition to all privileges and inequities among nations is an essential and inherent ingredient of genuine internationalism. How can one be an internationalist and tolerate national oppression? Equally important, since the nationalism of oppressed people is a reaction to this oppression and chauvinism, their nationalist prejudices and hostility can only be overcome

if the workers of the dominant nation fight alongside the oppressed for its national freedom. Thus, Lenin explained, support to struggles for national liberation is an anti-nationalist policy, i.e., it is aimed at liquidating the ideology and mystique of nationalism.

Comrade Thomas easily scores points against Wohlforth and others on the progressive character of national struggles.

Wohlforth (along with other dogmatists and Social Democrats) sees all social conflicts under capitalism reduced to, or subsumed into the struggle of wage workers against capitalists. In this two-dimensional world, there is no complexity, no unevenness, no combining or telescoping of stages. National and democratic struggles are bourgeois diversions and the permanent revolution is irrelevant. Reality is much richer than that.

The class struggle is refracted in many ways and is manifested indirectly as a result of numerous forms of oppression other than direct exploitation through wage labor. Social Democrats, Progressive Labor, and Workers League never understood this. In addition to exploitation of the working class, capitalism oppresses and robs people as nations, races, women, students, tenants, consumers, poor farmers, soldiers, etc. It is entirely in the interests of the proletariat for these groups to organize and fight against these forms of oppression even though these struggles are not directly based on class. Indeed these strata are enormous reservoirs of potential auxiliary revolutionary power. All of these struggles carried through consistently and to the end, must come into collision with the capitalist state, and must therefore develop an anti-capitalist direction and leadership.

Every genuine popular revolution draws all the discontented into its vortex. Numerous nonproletarian, alienated currents converge into the revolutionary torrent, seek to settle accounts with those who have been robbing, abusing, humiliating, and dehumanizing them, and to settle their particular grievances.

Thomas quotes a brilliant passage from Lenin, without understanding its significance: "To imagine that social revolution is *conceivable* without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without revolutionary outbursts by a section of the petty bourgeoisie *with all its prejudices*, without a movement of the politically non-conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against oppression by the landowners, the church, and the monarchy, against national oppression, etc.—to imagine all this is to *repudiate social revolution*. So one army lines up in one place and says, 'We are for socialism', and another, somewhere else and says, 'We are for imperialism', and that will be a social revolution! Only those who hold such a ridiculously pedantic view could vilify the Irish rebellion. . . .

"The socialist revolution in Europe *cannot be* anything other than an outburst of mass struggle on the part of all and sundry oppressed and discontented elements. Inevitably, sections of the petty bourgeoisie and of the backward workers will participate in it—without such participation, *mass struggle is impossible*, without it *no revolution is possible*—and just an inevitably will they bring into the movement their prejudices, their reactionary fantasies, their weaknesses and errors. But *objectively* they will attack *capital*, and the class-conscious vanguard of

the revolution, the advanced proletariat, expressing this objective truth of a variegated and discordant, motley and outwardly fragmented, mass struggle, will be able to unite and direct it, capture power, seize the banks, expropriate the trusts which all hate (though for different reasons!), and introduce other dictatorial measures which in their totality will amount to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the victory of socialism. . . ." (Vol. 22, pp. 355-6. Emphasis in original.) (Pp. 36, *ISR*, Jan. 1972.)

Thomas thinks these words somehow aid and abet his support to nationalism. It is true that this splendid exposition of the reality of the socialist revolution annihilates the simplistic notions of Wohlforth, et al., but it also undermines Thomas' argument. Lenin is explaining that many nonproletarian (even antiproletarian) elements will join the revolution with all their backwardness, and petty-bourgeois, reactionary prejudices, and will in spite of these prejudices objectively aid the proletariat in bringing down the bourgeois state. He does not suggest that these petty-bourgeois prejudices thereby become progressive, or have anything in common with Marxism; or that Marxists "love" and "embrace" them—and that is exactly what nationalism is, a backward petty-bourgeois prejudice, even though generated by chauvinist oppression. *Again, it is not national liberation movements that are petty-bourgeois or backward—but the ideology of nationalism*. They are *not* the same.

It is certainly true that national liberation movements may, and often do, fall under nationalist influence. While Marxists will not withhold support to actual struggles against oppression because of nationalist influence, they recognize it as a negative factor and certainly do not encourage it.

Let us consider the case of the Jewish minority. Lenin said the Jews were the most oppressed people in Europe. He was of course a staunch fighter against the persecution of the Jews—this is the "negative" side, the democratic content. On the other hand, he was also an uncompromising fighter against any attempt to promote Jewish nationalism, Jewish culture, Jewish schools, . . . and a Jewish party.

Jewish Marxists in the Warsaw ghetto certainly would have joined the uprising against the Nazi murderers—but surely would not become Jewish nationalists. The nationalist, "positive" side of the struggle against Jewish oppression is *Zionism*, a totally reactionary force.

So we see that while Wohlforth fails to understand the democratic side of the Leninist policy on the national question, Comrade Thomas flunks the second part of the test, by failing to fight against nationalism, or what is the same thing, for internationalism.

Let us, in passing, dispose of the argument that Lenin's position does not apply to the oppressed minorities in the U. S. because, unlike the East European Jews, they have no bourgeoisie. We will examine the U. S. minorities later, but we note here that the SWP leadership has "consecrated" nationalism, not only in the U. S., but in Ireland, Quebec, Bangla Desh, Palestine, etc., etc. Most of these nations have bourgeois classes more highly developed than the Jews of czarist Russia.

The fact is that there were scores of oppressed peoples in czarist Russia, none with a big bourgeoisie, some with

no bourgeoisie at all, and Lenin was opposed to nationalism everywhere.

It should also be observed that if Marxists of an oppressed nation are consistent nationalists, then the Russian SDLP was a union of Ukrainian, Georgian, Polish, Jewish, etc., nationalists (except for the Great Russians). Nothing could be further from the truth! Among Marxists, "nationalism" was universally accepted as a purely derogatory term, implying a fundamental petty-bourgeois deviation. Marxists are people who have arrived at the highest level of consciousness, transcending the limitations of particular or special interests of any kind, and who have become universal humans, working for the emancipation of the entire human race.

5) *Nationalism of the Oppressed and the Oppressor*

But didn't Lenin say that Marxists must take very different attitudes toward the nationalism of the oppressed and the oppressor? Of course. But what is the *nature* of the difference? Did he say we must support and encourage the one and oppose the other? Never. He opposed both. It is the *kind* of opposition that must be different. The nationalism of the oppressed is an understandable reaction to the chauvinism of the oppressor. Indeed, there is widespread "racism," i.e., hatred of all whites among Blacks. No socialist would equate this with white racism and oppose both in the same way. We understand, are tolerant of the "hate whitey" sentiments among Blacks, whereas we excoriate white racism. But it does not follow that we promote anti-white sentiments among Blacks. Lenin expressed the sensitivity of a genuine internationalist: "For the proletariat it is not only important, it is absolutely essential that he should be assured that non-Russians place the greatest possible trust in the proletariat class struggle. What is needed to ensure this? Not merely formal equality. In one way or another, by one's attitude or by concessions, it is necessary to compensate the non-Russians for the lack of trust, for the suspicion and the insults to which the government of the "dominant" nation subjected them in the past." (P. 168.)

This means that while Marxists never make *ideological* concessions to nationalism, they must make *tactical* concessions, lean over backward, be fully sensitive to the feelings of suspicion, distrust and even hostilities on the part of the oppressed. It means that criticism must be expressed with the greatest tact, and patience, and then mainly by Blacks and Chicanos, etc. It means that we will not insist on absolute, formal equality in all situations, because this often means perpetuating inequalities. It means that we will support demands by oppressed minorities for "superequality" in jobs (super-seniority, preferential hiring), education, etc., to help overcome the results of centuries of injustice and inequality.

Nationalism can be a distorted expression of rebellion (as is frequently the case with a dissident religion) and is often an unavoidable phase in the development of a full socialist consciousness. National pride, aggressiveness, even hatred of all members of the oppressor nation is a step forward from subservience, feelings of inferiority and passivity. None of which makes nationalism (or national or racial hatreds) consistent with Marxism or vice-versa.

6) *The Dialectics of Nationalism — Internationalism*

When confronted with the absurd contradiction of equating or identifying consistent nationalism (on the part of the oppressed) with its opposite, internationalism, SWP spokespersons will inevitably reply—"you obviously don't understand dialectics comrade," only revealing their own ignorance—and more likely—sophistry. It is common knowledge that the "dialectic" is the last refuge of the confusionist who finds her/himself in an untenable position.

In characterizing this contradiction as "dialectical" our "dialecticians" are saying more than they realize. The contradiction between nationalism and internationalism is indeed dialectical, and therefore *irreconcilable*. It is an ideological contradiction that reflects the objective contradiction between capitalism and socialism. It would be just as clever to say that the real interests of capitalism if pursued consistently leads to socialism. The contradiction (both in social reality and ideology) is resolved—not by reconciliation (as the SWP leadership tries to do—but by struggle and by the defeat and replacement of the old by the new and higher form.

Here is a relevant quotation Comrade Thomas overlooked:

"Bourgeois nationalism and proletarian internationalism—these are the two irreconcilably hostile slogans that correspond to the two great class camps throughout the capitalist world, and express the *two* policies (nay world outlooks) in the national question" (pg. 19).

This is the dialectic of nationalism and internationalism, according to *Lenin*, and in language it is simply impossible to misconstrue—so it is simply ignored. Why? Because the clear statement that nationalism is the policy and world outlook of the class camp of the bourgeoisie is in direct contradiction to the party line, which is that nationalism is an "empty vessel" that can be filled with a proletarian content, i.e., proletarian nationalism (sic!).

If bourgeois nationalism and proletarian internationalism are "the two great class camps," what is the camp of "proletarian nationalism"? It is nothing else but the same *third* camp we heard about in the past; *the camp of the petty bourgeoisie!*

While it is an absurd (not a dialectical) contradiction to postulate that consistent nationalism equals internationalism, consistent internationalism does imply full support to national liberation struggles, and consistent struggles for national liberation "by any means necessary" does lead to internationalism, but only through the transcending and negation of nationalism.

II. *National Movements in the United States*

The national question in the U. S. today is obviously different in many respects from the national question which Lenin grappled with in czarist Russia. Our unique problems cannot be solved by a mechanical application of Lenin's policy. Nevertheless, we believe all the clues to their solution are to be found in it.

1. Are U. S. Blacks a nation?

Trotsky wrote in the '30s: "The Negroes are a race, not a nation. Nations grow out of the racial material under definite conditions." Thomas believes that this transformation has since taken place, and that Afro-Americans are now a nation. The "definite conditions" that brought about this evolution, he sees as follows: "The industrialization and urbanization of African-Americans in the twen-

tieth century has deepened our sense of 'nationhood.' Instead of being dispersed throughout the rural South, Blacks are now concentrated in huge urban ghettos. The majority of African-Americans today live in twelve major cities." (Pg. 25, "In Defense of Black Nationalism.")

The matter is not so simple. There has been a process of both concentration and dispersion. One could reverse Thomas' statement and be even more correct: instead of being largely concentrated within a single area of the country, Blacks are now dispersed into enclaves scattered from one end of the country to the other. For Marxists, the potential for Black nationhood, and therefore the basis for the slogan of "the right to self-determination," always related to the masses of Blacks who comprised the labor force for the agricultural economy of the old South. As with all underdeveloped areas, the national question was linked to the land question as the two primary aspects of the bourgeois democratic revolution.

The fact is that the objective material basis for the Black nation has been virtually eliminated. The Black peasantry (sharecroppers) and agricultural laborers have largely become a segment of the American industrial proletariat, although unassimilated. The only genuine nationalists among the Blacks are those who advocate mass migration either to Africa, or to a region of the U. S., and their support is very small and dwindling. Most urban oriented "nationalist" leaders are simply trying to exploit the Black condition to get a piece of the action through "Black capitalism" and "Black Power" (by which they mean the election of Black politicians acting as agents for the white dominated capitalist parties).

The Black "nationalist" surge of the '60s has largely petered out, precisely because it lacked a clear national perspective. It is not at all certain that the next wave of Black struggle will take a nationalist turn. This will only occur if again, such a movement erupts in the context of passivity, and unabated racism on the part of the white workers. It is not the variant Marxists prefer and work for. A thousand times better would be a simultaneous movement of white and Black workers in a general upsurge such as occurred in the CIO rebellion. The consequence of that movement was a tendency among Blacks away from nationalist separation toward class unity.

Trotsky's definition of U. S. Blacks as a racial minority still holds good, with the amendment that a common history of oppression and segregation has generated elements of a national culture and national feelings. Thus, it is a kind of hybrid racial-national minority.

Chicanos and Puerto Ricans are somewhat the reverse. They are national minorities with racial overtones.

2. The Right to Self-determination Versus Black Control of Black Communities.

What is the significance of the traditional Leninist policy of the right to self-determination as applied to Blacks in the U. S.? Strictly speaking, this right, in the Marxist sense, meant only the right of a nation to secede and establish its own national state. Lenin says "—it would be wrong to interpret the right to self-determination as meaning anything but the right to existence as a separate state." (Lenin, pg. 47.)

But if both the objective conditions and the subjective desires of Blacks for separation into an independent state are virtually nonexistent, the "right to self-determination" concept, while retaining all its validity in the abstract, has

become all but irrelevant. It should remain in the party's program as a matter of principle, but should no longer occupy a central place in its agitation. Instead, the party invented a special application for "the right of self-determination" in the form of "Black control of Black communities" with its corollary: Black control of Black institutions, such as schools, police, business, etc.

To begin with, in the Marxist terminology community control is not related to "self-determination" at all, but to a completely different category, i.e., local autonomy. Lenin approached *this* question in an entirely different way. He favored the *right* of nations to self-determination, but not necessarily the exercise of that right, i.e., separation. Regarding local or regional autonomy, he said: we do not favor the *right* to decide for or against local autonomy, we are unqualifiedly *for* it as an elementary form of democratic self-rule.

The "right to self-determination" refers to the right of a nation to an independent existence if it so wishes.

"Community control" refers to local autonomy, which is not necessarily related to nationhood or nationalism at all. Moreover, the party's application of local autonomy in the form of "Black control of Black communities and cultural institutions," along with the advocacy of separate exclusive political parties for each national minority is a nationalist revision of Lenin's concept and in direct contradiction to it.

An essential element of Lenin's policy on this question was his insistence that national composition, though important, was not the sole basis for defining the boundaries of an autonomous region. He considered economic and social conditions to be at least equally important, and assumed that no region would be defined along strictly national or "cultural-national" lines. That is why he never advocated "national autonomy."

For instance, an autonomous region inhabited mainly by Ukrainians might well include significant numbers of Russians and Jews. Lenin would have totally rejected a slogan of "Ukrainian control of the Ukrainian region." He advocated control over all regional affairs by the entire population of that region, with full participation of minorities within the region as first-class citizens. This is consistent with Lenin's entire approach which is national freedom without national exclusiveness or narrowness. He opposed any and every kind of organization—whether of a regional government, union, party, or school—based on ethnic grounds—for this splits the working class and generates narrow nationalist sentiments.

Closely related to the question of Black control (as distinct from community control) is the party's support to movements to foster "Black culture" and to control Black cultural institutions. Commenting on this aspect of the Bolshevik program, Trotsky wrote: "One of the aims of the Austrian program of 'cultural autonomy' was 'the preservation and development of the national idiosyncrasies of peoples.' Why and for what purpose? asked Bolshevism in amazement. Segregating the various nationalistic portions of mankind was never our concern. True, Bolshevism insisted that each nation should have the right to secede—the right, but not the duty—as the ultimate, most effective guarantee against oppression. But the thought of artificially preserving national idiosyncrasies was profoundly alien to Bolshevism. The removal of any, even disguised, even the most refined and practically "im-

ponderable" national oppression or indignity, must be used for the revolutionary unification rather than the segregation of the workers of various nationalities."

Lenin wrote "The slogan of working-class democracy is not 'national culture' but the international culture of democracy and the world-wide working class movement. Let the bourgeoisie deceive the people with various 'positive' national programmes." (Pp. 15.)

Earl Ofari, the independent Black Marxist whom Thomas debated in print, wrote the following about Black culture: "Black bourgeois art contributes to this too. The poems, plays, literature of the 'militant' black artists are hailed by ruling class organs like *Time*, *Newsweek*, the *New York Times*, movie industry, etc. None of it shows class struggle. It glorifies feudal African traditions, reactionary kings and empires, male chauvinism, individualism, and every lumpen element in the black community from the hustler to the drifter. The enemy is 'whitey,' 'the Jew,' 'the pig,' but never the real enemy: capitalism and imperialism. These 'new' black cultural forms never treat the daily existence of black workers, nor do they deal with Marxism-Leninism except as a put-down." (Pg. 44, *Black Scholar* Sept. 1972.) Although Thomas arrogantly accuses Ofari of "ignorance of the real Marxist position—" in truth Ofari's position on this question is far closer to Marxism.

The correct application of the Leninist concept of local autonomy of the oppressed communities of the U.S. is "community control of the ghettos and barrios." That means equal participation by all residents of the community in deciding and administering its affairs. No community is composed exclusively of one ethnic group. At the very least they are all mixed at the boundaries. The vast barrio in L.A. contains large numbers of Asians, Blacks and some Anglos. The inclusion of even a small percentage of oppressed people of different ethnic origins helps to shift the common denominator from Blacks or La Raza to a common *oppression*, i.e., from national (or racial) unity to class unity. This was the entire thrust of Lenin's approach, while that of the party is to emphasize the exclusivity, the separation, on the basis of nationality. We will see this same nationalist deviation manifested in the Black party and Chicano party slogans.

But the party's line on community control is also erroneous in selecting this as the central slogan and attributing to it a revolutionary transitional character. Local autonomy, though a part of the Leninist platform on the national question, never occupied a central place.

First, this demand offers no solution whatever to the most urgent and fundamental needs of Blacks or Chicano people. Community control will not solve the problems of jobs, of job equality, of equal pay, of racist abuse and discrimination on the job and in the union, nor for that matter of housing or education, or sanitation in the community. The right of a community to control its own affairs is a legitimate democratic demand—but to win control of dilapidated ghettos, run-down, underequipped, understaffed and overcrowded schools, etc., is a very limited aim. The solutions to the major problems cannot come from within the community but in mass economic, social and political struggles against the capitalist class and its state; and if these struggles are limited to Blacks, the results will be very limited.

It is absolutely untrue that community control, or its

outward appearance, cannot be achieved under capitalism. It is true that community soviets will not displace bourgeois state rule this side of the revolution. But given a rise in militancy and radicalization, the bourgeoisie is perfectly capable of offering Black politicians and judges for the people to elect, as well as to permit the substitution of Black merchants, policemen (including commanders), teachers, principals, administrators, etc., for white. They will gladly offer "Black Power," Black culture, and Black capitalism to prevent the movement from advancing to class power. In fact this kind of community control is already developing in cities such as Newark.

3) *The Black Party*

Lenin, as we have shown, was categorically opposed to any kind of organization on ethnic lines. This is consistent with his struggle to "obliterate" all national distinctions, and to foster the greatest degree of unity in the working class. He waged a relentless campaign against the Jewish Bund which wanted an exclusive charter to speak for the Jewish proletariat, and would exclude non-Jews. Yet the Jews were in many respects the "Niggers" of eastern Europe and Lenin referred to them as the most persecuted and oppressed people. Nevertheless, he argued that such a party breeds nationalism and divides the working class. Party organization, he insisted, must be based on *geographical*, not ethnic considerations, and all workers within a given area must be organized without regard to national origins. Thus he favored the organization of sections of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party in Poland, the Ukraine, etc., but was opposed to a Polish party which would exclude Jews, Ukrainians and others living in Poland. This is the same approach he applied to the question of local autonomy.

Lenin expressed his views on the matter in the most categorical and unequivocal manner: "Working-class democracy contraposes to the nationalist wrangling of the various bourgeois parties over questions of language, etc., the demand for the unconditional unity and complete amalgamation of workers of *all* nationalities in *all* working-class organisations—trade union, co-operative, consumers, educational and all others—in contradistinction to any kind of bourgeois nationalism. Only this type of unity and amalgamation can uphold democracy and defend the interest of the workers against capital—which is already international and is becoming more so—and promote the development of mankind towards a new way of life that is alien to all privileges and all exploitation." (Pg. 15), and further, "On the other hand, the socialists of the oppressed nations must, in particular, defend and implement the full and unconditional unity, including *organisational unity, of the workers of the oppressed nation and those of the oppressor nation.*" (Pg. 115. Emphasis added.)

Trotsky, expounding the Bolshevik position on the national question, explained the concept of self-determination and continued: "But that was only one side of the matter. The policy of Bolshevism in the national sphere had also another side, apparently contradictory to the first but in reality supplementing it. Within the framework of the party, and of the workers' organizations in general, Bolshevism insisted upon a rigid centralism, implacably warring against every taint of nationalism which might set the workers one against the other or disunite them. While

flatly refusing to the bourgeois states the right to impose compulsory citizenship, or even a state language, upon a national minority, Bolshevism at the same time made it a verily sacred task to unite as closely as possible, by means of voluntary class discipline, the workers of different nationalities." (Vol. III, pg. 38. *History of the Russian Revolution*.) Strangely, Thomas provides us with a very similar quote from Trotsky: "At the same time, Lenin deemed it the incontrovertible duty of all workers of a given state, irrespective of nationality, to unite in one and the same class organizations." (Pg. 37, *ISR*, Jan. 1972.) Apparently Comrade Thomas sees no need to comment on the fact that this position of Lenin's (and Trotsky's) is diametrically opposed to the party's.

Lenin argued further that nationalist parties inevitably fell under the influence of the national bourgeoisie. Some contend that this argument does not apply in the case of U.S. minorities, because there is no Black, Chicano or Puerto Rican bourgeoisie. This is not the first resort to "American exceptionalism." In the past it has always turned out to be a rationalization for opportunist revisions of Marxist principles. This attempt is no exception to that rule.

In the first place there was no Jewish big bourgeoisie in czarist Russia. There were shoemakers, tailors, butchers, rabbis, merchants (mostly peddlers), saloon keepers, and some successful moneylenders. There were no industrialists, and landowners were rare. Yet Lenin was absolutely correct in asserting that Jewish nationalism, including a national party, would be dominated by Jewish business and clergy.

While there are few Black bankers and industrialists, there is a rapidly growing Black petty-bourgeois elite—wholesale and retail merchants, newspaper publishers, professionals, preachers, politicians, technicians, government bureaucrats, business administrators, military officers, policemen, entertainers, etc. There is a conscious effort to crystalize out an upper crust to keep the Black discontent from boiling over. It is a standard operating procedure now for every government and business office to have its one, two or several Blacks, and militants by the thousands have been bought off with jobs in "poverty programs," or the like. Though this elite is far from constituting a big bourgeoisie, its outlook, mentality, aspirations and ideology are thoroughly bourgeois.

It is argued that the elite will oppose the formation of a Black party, leaving a clear field for the proletarian forces. It is true that, at this point, the Black elite are not interested in dominating a Black party, but then no one else is either, because there is no party to dominate.

On the other hand, while the Chicano petty bourgeoisie generally ignores the La Raza Unida Party in California where it is extremely weak, in the one area in Texas where it has won the leadership of the masses and taken office, its bourgeois traits have become evident even to the SWP. It is there, where the movement reached serious proportions, that the inherent limitations of a petty-bourgeois nationalist party are clearly revealed.

This is Ofari's estimate of the role of the Black elite: ". . . little attention has ever been given to the black elite as apologists for imperialism in the black community. This goes beyond mere sentiments. It aims at the conscious pacification and subversion of class organizing and socialist ideas among colonized black workers.

"It's no accident that the black movement, no matter

whether it's been for civil rights or black power, has been led by this elite; and for petty-bourgeois demands such as more black administrators, foremen and black 'capitalists'. The Black Power conferences in Newark, Philadelphia, Atlanta and the Black Expo in Chicago were backed to the hilt by some of the largest American corporations. Many of the 'militant' Black Power leaders from groups like CORE, SNCC, Operation Breadbasket, are now tailing behind both the Democrats and The Republicans. This is a phenomenon seen in all oppressed nations." ("Marxism-Leninism—The Key to Black Liberation," by Earl Ofari; printed in the *Black Scholar*, Sept., 1972, pg. 37.)

It is not accidental that virtually the entire Black power movement, including its most "revolutionary" forces, have not only ended up in the blind alley of bourgeois politics, but in the reactionary utopia of "Black capitalism."

All the persistent shouting for a Black party has fallen on deaf ears. There has been absolutely zero response. . . and La Raza Unida, never a mass party, is in a state of serious decline. Just as nationalism in general has declined to a low point, so has interest in an all-Black party, and it was never very high. The great majority seeks solutions through the multiracial Democratic Party, and the advanced elements look for a multiracial, anticapitalist, antinationalist party. . . and wind up in the C.P., the Maoist groups, P.L., or the ultraleftist sects. Blacks resist political separation because they understand very well that they cannot win alone. Every time there has been an approach by oppressed whites, they have seized the opportunities to join in class solidarity, rather than to separate (agrarian populism after the civil war, the CIO movement of the '30s, etc.).

Yet the emergence of a Black party cannot be entirely ruled out. Should a sharp rise in militancy develop among Blacks while the white workers remain conservative, racist and politically passive, Blacks may decide to go it alone. Marxists will not condemn, nor ignore such a party. They will enter it and support every struggle it wages for the rights of Black people, and will give critical support to its candidates. But, they will do nothing to perpetuate the exclusive nationalist character of the party. On the contrary, they will work for the maximum unity with workers of other oppressed minorities, and with anti-racist white workers. They will educate and organize the proletarian elements to struggle against the petty-bourgeois elite; they will fight to convert the petty-bourgeois nationalist party into the vanguard of a united revolutionary workers party, fighting for the liberation of all oppressed.

Obviously, in a country with such a heterogeneous working class, the revolutionary workers' movement will not be homogeneous, but will include submovements representing the interests of the various strata. Separate political parties for each sector of the oppressed and exploited would accentuate the unevenness, the particularism, the centrifugal tendencies. The political struggle is the *generalized* struggle against the state. The heterogeneity of the masses makes especially imperative the need for a single united proletarian party, which integrates the vanguard of all oppressed strata into a unified revolutionary force and a concentrated assault against the capitalist state.

It is only in this limited sense that we can speak of a "combined revolution," i.e., the coalescing of the struggles of all oppressed segments behind the proletariat, and the corresponding combination of democratic and socialist

demands. In reality, this applies in varying degrees to all countries.

4) *National Liberation Movements in the U.S.*

Ideally, special struggles and special organizations should be unnecessary. Ideally, a class-conscious integrated labor movement should lead a united struggle against all forms of oppression. But we do not have an ideal situation, and will never have, so we have no ideal solution.

Blacks (and Chicanos) cannot, will not and should not wait for the white working class to shed its racism and general quiescence. The emergence of organizations to spearhead the struggle for liberation from national oppression can be expected before, during and after the revolution. Obviously neither the racism of white workers, nor the fully justified skepticism of the Blacks, will entirely disappear before, or immediately after the revolution.

To the extent that Black struggles erupt while the white workers remain passive and hostile, these struggles will tend to assume a nationalist, anti-white character. Such struggles are progressive, *in spite* of their nationalist prejudices which are a reaction to white chauvinism. Nationalist movements on the part of Blacks are detours forced upon them by the backwardness of the white workers. Marxists must understand and exercise the greatest patience toward Black nationalism, including its inherent anti-white ingredient, *without themselves succumbing to it.*

However, while the principal forces and leadership for a Black liberation movement will be Black, it need not be *exclusively* Black, and it need not have national or nationalist aims. Only Blacks can be Black nationalists, but fighters for Black liberation can come in any color.

A Black, (a Chicano, a women's) movement may, especially in its early stages, feel the need to exclude whites (or men), because of a lack of self-confidence or mistrust. These feelings, obviously, must be respected and accepted. But by making a *virtue* of exclusiveness, as the party does, and to insist on it, instead of helping the movement advance to a higher stage, the party exercises a clearly regressive influence.

For instance, there have been cases in which non-Chicanos have participated in activities of LRUP chapters and were readily accepted. Instead of welcoming and encouraging this attitude, the SWP leadership was sharply critical of this "antinationalist" policy of the LRUP chapter. Thus the SWP leadership was more backward than the LRUP chapter and tried to drag it back to a narrow nationalist level.

We observed the party playing the same part in the Ofari-Thomas debate, in which Thomas attacks Ofari for advancing from nationalism toward an internationalist, Leninist position, and in the name of Lenin!

Still another example was the case of Malcolm X. Our Black propagandists have, for years, relied heavily on the writings of Malcolm in defending its Black nationalist line. But Malcolm was far from being a Marxist. He came from a rabidly white hating, mystical Black Muslim cult, and though he travelled a long way, he was still steeped in religion and only beginning to rise above his narrow nationalism when he died. But even so, as he moved toward internationalism, he passed by the party, which was travelling the other way.

Shortly before he was killed he was asked in a *Young*

Socialist interview how he defined Black nationalism. He replied, "I used to define black nationalism as the idea that the black man should control the economy of his community, the politics of his community, and so forth."

He then told of a conversation he had with an Algerian revolutionary who "was a white man. And he said if I define my objective as the victory of black nationalism, where does that leave him? . . . So he showed me where I was alienating true revolutionaries . . .

"So I had to do a lot of thinking and reappraising of my definition of black nationalism. Can we sum up the solution to the problems confronting our people as black nationalism? And if you notice, I haven't been using the expression for several months. But I still would be hard pressed to give a specific definition of the overall philosophy which I think is necessary for the liberation of the black people in this country." (Pg. 31, *Two Speeches by Malcolm X*, Pathfinder.)

The party leadership was obviously quite shook up about this. Comrade Breitman explained it away in a speech delivered on March 5, 1965:

"Malcolm had been a black nationalist—it was the starting point for all his thinking, the source of his strength and dynamism. And he remained a black nationalist to his last hour, however uncertain he was about what to call himself or the program he was trying to formulate. It would be a bad mistake to mix up what he was with what he thought might be a better name for what he was." (*Malcolm X—The Man and His Ideas*, pg. 20.)

How revealing is this episode! Malcolm awoke to the realization that Black nationalism separated him (and Blacks generally), from non-Black revolutionaries. So he felt compelled to reexamine his entire outlook—why? To find a better definition of Black nationalism, as Comrade Breitman suggests? This is obvious nonsense. Malcolm called into question the very "objective" of "the victory of black nationalism," and asks whether Black nationalism can really "sum up the solution to the problems confronting our people." And he stopped using the expression altogether! Isn't it perfectly clear that he was reappraising the very essence of Black nationalism, which he called his "political, social, economic philosophy?" Of course it is!

But the party could not accept this because Malcolm, in making this remarkable advance toward internationalism, struck at the very heart of the party's retrogressive nationalism.

So he had to be shoved back into the confines of Black nationalism, and compelled to die a nationalist against his own expressed wish. Poor Malcolm's ghost must understand all too well the adage: "Protect me from my friends, I'll take care of my enemies." The character of the party's intervention in national struggles is the opposite of what it should be.

The correct Leninist position toward national struggles is to fully support and help initiate struggles against national oppression, without giving a finger to nationalism. The party should give a very high priority to intervention into all movements against racial and national oppression, whether tainted with nationalism or not. And "intervention" does not mean mainly selling *Militants*. Party cadres should become the most active, loyal, dependable, and tireless fighters within community struggle organizations and in the trade unions.

But Marxists are not simply fighters for the immediate needs of the oppressed. Their duty is to elevate the consciousness of their coworkers, from immediate to historic interests, from particular group interests to general, international class interests. Struggles for national liberation will be successful if they transcend nationalist limitations and orient toward the working class as a whole.

The Balance Sheet

What is the balance sheet of the party's work among the oppressed minorities in the U.S.? It is an undeniable fact, that with all the opportunist tailending of petty-bourgeois nationalism, the party has failed utterly and completely to gain any appreciable influence among the oppressed peoples of the U.S. After more than forty years of work, the Los Angeles branch does not have a single Black member! Nor does it have even a toehold in a Mexican community whose population is second only to Mexico City. In Oakland, where the majority of the population is Black and a substantial proportion Chicano, a similar situation exists. Since the last convention there has been an absolute decline in the number of Chicano comrades. Now there are only two, one of whom was transferred in. There are five Blacks and of these, three were transferred in. This record is not substantially different anywhere else in the country.

Considering the unprecedented degree of militancy and radicalism that developed in these communities in the last decade, and that both the Maoists and Stalinists and even the ultraleft sects have been far more successful than the SWP, this failure constitutes a first-class scandal. Trotsky considered the ability of a party to root itself among the most oppressed strata (even if it meant "sluffing off several petty-bourgeois layers") a critical test of its revolutionary character. A party that is unable to work among the most oppressed, that cannot win their confidence, and cannot recruit even when there are large numbers of revolutionary minded workers among them is a disgrace to the world Trotskyist movement.

Yet the leadership finds no need to reevaluate its policies or practice. The party is infallible as always, even when its record is one of abysmal failure.

When asked why our opponents are more successful than we are in recruiting minority militants, the party leaders reply: "that is because it is easier to recruit them with an antinationalist line." Of course this is not the main reason, but there may well be some truth in it. National liberation fighters who have advanced beyond national consciousness toward international and socialist consciousness are not interested in becoming the "most consistent nationalists"—that's where they are coming *from!* The Maoists and Stalinists have made gains because they participate actively, and because they sound like internationalists compared to the SWP, even though their internationalism is counterfeit.

However, *the principal reason for the isolation of the party from the oppressed minority masses, including their radicalized layers, is its self-isolation, its almost complete abstention from participation in the actual struggles of these masses!* All the so-called "interventions" are purely literary—the writing of articles and sales of *The Militant*. The universal joke throughout the left is that when the revolution comes, the SWP will be there alright, selling *Militants* to the fighters on the barricades.

How account for this shameful state of affairs? The answer is to be found in the petty-bourgeois apparatus mentality that prevails in the party. The party is simply not oriented toward the working class, and it is therefore estranged from the most oppressed workers—the national and racial minorities, and this applies both to the factories and the communities. The few minority students who are recruited are not steered into working-class communities, but into the headquarters, into the apparatus. It is fine to recruit students, but they should complete their studies in the school of the mass movement—in the unions and the working-class communities, learning about class and national struggles first hand, learning how to organize, educate and recruit workers, and first of all how to win their confidence through patient modest work. Instead, the elitist inclinations of students are reinforced by bringing them into a closed, insulated circle which lectures the masses from a distance, turning these students into "apparachiks."

How many comrades live in the ghettos and barrios; we know of none. Where are comrades encouraged to live? As close to the headquarters as possible. How many are doing consistent work in a Black or Chicano organization? Hardly any. Yet our Black and Chicano members talk about "our people," and insist they are ardent nationalists! The fact is the "nationalism" of party Blacks and Chicanos is a fake, and everybody knows it. The fact is that they do not feel comfortable among their "people." Their training has been such that they are happiest among their petty-bourgeois peers in the party headquarters. This kind of "nationalism" is an opportunist adaptation, not a sincere reaction against racist oppression. What is so ironic is that this opportunism, instead of bringing easy "successes," is admittedly self-defeating. To be isolated because the party is too far ahead is one thing; to be isolated because the party is too backward is quite another.

The party has failed because its policy and practice are exactly opposite of what they should be: it *abstains* from national struggles, and preaches *nationalism* (from the pages of *The Militant*) whereas it should *participate* in these struggles and teach *internationalism*.

Conclusion

What is required is nothing less than a major rearming of the party on all levels: ideology, orientation, and style of work.

This means a thoroughgoing reeducation of the party, from top to bottom on the national question. Lenin's writing on this subject should be not only read, but studied intensively. Before the party can carry on successful work among the oppressed minorities, it must be completely purged of petty-bourgeois nationalism.

Second, it is imperative that the party shift its major emphasis and its top priority from the campuses to the working class, and first of all to its most oppressed sectors.

It should seize on those issues that tend to unite the different segments of the class. The Farm Workers support coalition in Los Angeles is an excellent example of this kind of work. For the first time in years, a spirit of class solidarity and activism is being generated. The Coalition is broader, with more labor participation than any in which the party has participated for a long time,

linking white workers and students with the Mexican farm workers and the Chicano community. It is to the credit of the party that it is participating actively in this coalition, although it was initiated by others and opposed by the party until it proved successful. Unfortunately however, the party is unable to take full advantage of the opportunity to make gains in the Chicano community because of our isolation from it. Contact with the community is limited to the perennial endorsers and forum speakers.

The Farah strike is another such issue. The boycott weapon makes these struggles nationwide and can therefore be extended into all areas.

Finally, a campaign must be conducted against ingrown sectarian routinism. Every member (with exceptions of course) should be directed and helped, to find a milieu outside the party, preferably where she/he can be in contact with workers and participate in their daily struggles.

We can learn from those great mass workers, the Wobblies (IWW), who referred to headquarters hanger-arounders, contemptuously, as "hallcats."

On the walls of every party office, there should be posted the slogan: "OUT OF THE HEADQUARTERS, INTO THE MASS MOVEMENT."

July 17, 1973

A CORRECTION TO BULLETIN 16

by Jim Rousey, San Francisco Branch

In "An Initial Evaluation of the 'Breakthrough' Strategy" (SWP Discussion Bulletin, Vol. 31, No. 16, p. 10), due to a typographic error, I have misquoted Germain on the attitude of the European comrades to Vietnam solidarity work in 1968-1972. The quote should read: "For French revolutionists, Italian revolutionists, Ger-

man revolutionists, there does not exist any possibility of making an immediate direct contribution to the victory of the South Vietnamese revolution, except by making an immediate victorious socialist revolution in their own country." (Political Report at the December 1969 Meeting of the IEC, International Information Bulletin No. 1, January 1971, p. 7.)

NATIONALISM AND "IN DEFENCE OF LENINISM"

by Jim Rousey, San Francisco Branch

Among the other errors of both fact and theory made by E. Germain in "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International" are those in relation to the Trotskyist position on nationalism and the national struggle. These errors are concentrated primarily in section 16, "Tailending a New 'Stage-Theory' of the Revolution," and section 17, "Tailending Petty-Bourgeois Nationalism." It would be profitable to contrast Comrade Germain's formulations in this document to those of Lenin, Trotsky, and Comrade Germain's own previous writings on the subject. Many of the quotations are taken from either "Marxism Versus Ultraleftism: Key Issues in Healy's Challenge to the Fourth International" (hereafter referred to as MVU) published by the Fourth International in 1967 and written by E. Germain, or from "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International" (hereafter referred to as IDL) which was published in International Internal Discussion Bulletin, Volume X, Number 4, in April 1973 also written by E. Germain.

"TAILENDING A NEW 'STAGE THEORY' OF THE REVOLUTION"

Who's Tailending a New Stage-Theory?

In section 16 Comrade Germain begins with a quota-

tion from an article which was in the September/October 1972 issue of *Liberation* and was written by Comrade Beiner of the Canadian section. The article explains that "the national bourgeoisie of an oppressed nation (like Quebec), owing to its dependence on world imperialism, is incapable of breaking all imperialist ties in order to lead a national liberation struggle against foreign oppression to a successful conclusion." (IDL, p. 51.) According to Germain, however, "Is it true that, because the national bourgeoisie is dependent upon imperialism, it is unable to *break all ties with imperialism and therefore* cannot lead a victorious struggle against foreign oppression? This is completely wrong." (IDL, p. 30, his emphasis.) Germain has made a basic methodological mistake.

Beiner's thesis is the inability of the national bourgeoisie to carry the struggle against foreign oppression by means of a national liberation movement to a successful conclusion. "It must be clearly understood beforehand that the belated revolutions in Asia and Africa are incapable of opening up a new epoch of renaissance for the nation-state." (IDL, p. 34.) Thus, if Trotsky as quoted by Germain is correctly understood, it is patently impossible for the bourgeoisie to lead the struggle against foreign oppression to the only successful conclusion possible in the

age of imperialism — a socialist revolution. Secondly, there is in addition the question of the inability of the bourgeoisie to establish a national market. Germain, however, is headed in a different direction.

"The history of the 20th century has confirmed that it is not necessary to 'break all ties with imperialism' in order to eliminate foreign national oppression." (IDL, p. 30.) Germain then turns around and changes his mind, after a fashion. "The inability of the national bourgeoisie to start a process of cumulative industrialization makes it in many cases impossible to create a national market and thereby to bring to an end the process of formation of a classical nation in the historic sense of the word." (IDL, p. 30.) Germain then proceeds to dismiss the whole point as raising questions "far beyond the realm of 'foreign national oppression.'" (IDL, p. 30.) This is a most remarkable method to use in a polemic. First, we are treated to a major attack on Comrade Beiner's article, and then an immediate concession that he might be right in an "historic" sense followed by an airy dismissal of the entire question! Comrade Germain then sets up straw men and demolishes them with glee.

"Trotsky never stated that in the epoch of imperialism, the 'national' bourgeoisie in a backward country is unable to *begin* waging a struggle for *some* of the historical demands of the bourgeois democratic revolution." (IDL, p. 30, his emphasis.) Neither does Beiner. Beiner's point is that they can *start* to struggle around *some* demands, but they cannot carry the struggle to a final conclusion. Germain even points this out himself. "All these reasons have to be added to the 'national' bourgeoisie's links with imperialism in order to understand why, while it can certainly *start* the struggle for *some* demands of the bourgeois-democratic revolution, it cannot fulfill them *all*, especially not the agrarian revolution and the break with the capitalist world market as a necessary precondition for a cumulative industrialization process." (IDL, p. 31, his emphasis.) It would be a waste of time to deal with Germain's polemic against the Stalinist two-stage theory since the Canadian section disagrees with that theory also. There is one group which is soft on the question. The Revolutionary Communist Tendency of Canada has a slightly different line on the question as does its former cofactionalist Michel Mill, whom Germain praises as an expert on Quebec and the person who, in Germain's opinion, first recognized the necessity of raising the independence slogan for Quebec.

The RCT, the GMR, and the Two-Stage Theory

Before proceeding, a point of political agreement has to be settled. The GMR (Revolutionary Marxist Group—Mill's group) and the RCT agree on Quebec. First, there is the fact that prior to Mill's split from the League for Socialist Action/Ligue Socialiste Ouvrière (the Canadian section), they were both in the same tendency. Second, when Mill split from the section, they endorsed his analysis but not his action. Third, the RCT document submitted to the Young Socialist/Ligue des Jeunes Socialistes (the Canadian youth group) 1972 convention, "The Revolutionary Communist Position on Quebec" (YS/LJS 1972 Discussion Bulletin, Volume 8, Number 12), is composed *entirely* of quotations from the "Mill-Peillard-Leroux Split Statement" (LSA/LSO 1972 Discussion Bulletin, Number 13). Having settled this point, the RCT theory about

Quebec can be dealt with.

In his summary on Quebec to the 1972 YS/LJS convention, Brett Smiley, the RCT reporter, in addition to describing the call for an independent Quebec as "tailendist and liquidationist," agreed with the statement of an RCT delegate that "the Quebec bourgeoisie can establish a stable bourgeois republic, unlike a banana republic." This assertion rested on nothing less than Quebec exceptionalism. This exceptionalism was based on the advanced industrial economy of Quebec which enabled the bourgeoisie of Quebec to take this step. This statement begins to clear up exactly who is supporting a two-stage theory.

Leaving aside the remarkable approach to internationalism indicated in formulations such as "a banana republic" to refer to oppressed nations which have had a one-crop economy forced on them by imperialism, we are left with one important fact. The RCT (supporters of the MMF tendency) agree with the Stalinists on the possibility of a two-stage revolution in Quebec *in fact*, even if they attempt to cloak it under a modification of the permanent revolution. The LSA/LSO majority (and Comrade Beiner) do not accept this theory. Therefore, Comrade Germain has, to put it mildly, misdirected his polemic. This is made additionally serious by Germain's misstatements of fact in regard to the actions and theories of Mill and the GMR.

The GMR in Action

Germain assures us that "objectivity demands to state unequivocally that Comrade Mill has been proven right against the majority leadership of the Canadian section in both instances where he differed with it on the national question." (IDL, p. 32.) These were in regard to raising the demand for an independent Quebec and requesting "the leadership to acknowledge the class struggle in Quebec . . ." (IDL, p. 32). Two important points have been missed by Germain. First, Mill and his tendency have differed with the leadership many times more than twice on the national question and several others. Second, the important point, and this is illustrated by the RCT description of the call for an independent Quebec as "tailendist and liquidationist," and the critical point is what the politics of the GMR *now*, not what Germain imagines they were then. On the second point we can consult Mill himself.

In the Mill Split Statement we are informed that the present period is characterized by, among other things, "the domination by the PQ (Parti Quebecois—a bourgeois party) of the nationalist movement." (Op. cit., p. 9.) This is quite true, in general, on the electoral plane, but would be insufficient in regard to the extraparliamentary activities such as the language struggle, the "McGill Français" struggle, the struggle against the New Pedagogic Regime, etc., none of which were led by the PQ. This would merely be an appraisal of the present situation *if* the Quebec bourgeoisie were unable to establish a stable, bourgeois republic. It then takes on a totally different character. Since it is the belief of the GMR that the nationalist demands can be co-opted into the PQ by the bourgeoisie, they then proceeded to come up some demands that can't be co-opted. If this sounds like an unduly harsh evaluation of the sectarian logic of the GMR, their leaflet

on tuition can clear up any confusion.

The GMR urges students *not* to struggle against tuition. The reason is that this demand has already been granted by the bourgeoisie elsewhere. Therefore, if the movement against tuition assumes a mass character, all the bourgeoisie has to do to demoralize it is grant the demand. This is the convoluted logic of the GMR. As a comrade pointed out at the YS/LJS convention, this is analogous to telling a starving colonial worker to fight for socialism not for food, because the bourgeoisie of the advanced capitalist countries have co-opted the workers' movement by granting this demand. The GMR has followed up this restatement of the transitional method—movements don't thrive on victory—with an equally interesting approach to "initiatives in action."

The GMR is a perfect example of how the logic of "initiatives in action" proceed. Their major innovation is that they carried out most of them against the LSA/LSO while still members of the section and against its discipline. In March they broke party discipline in the youth and voted with their youth cofactionalists against the discipline of the section. Around the April 15 demonstration, they added their own slogans to the leaflet an antiwar committee was putting out against the wishes of the committee and the discipline of the section. On May 9 they voted with our opponents at a public antiwar meeting to add "Victory to the NLF" and "PRG On To Saigon" to the slogans of the demonstration. On May 14 they endangered the entire work of the section in Quebec. They led an occupation of the offices of *Quebec-Presse*, a trade-union weekly, in order to deny column space to the PQ because they understood that the PQ wasn't in the workers' interests even if the workers don't. This elitist attitude, so common among the sectarians, finally led them to split in the middle of preconvention discussion, thus showing exactly how they felt about democratic centralism. (All these charges are documented in "Documents on the Mill-Peillard-Leroux Split," LSA/LSO 1972 Discussion Bulletin, Number 13.) It is this group that Germain counterposes as "objectively right" when it differed from the leadership! Germain proceeds to fabricate two charges against the LSA/LSO leadership to shore up his argument.

The LSA/LSO, Independence, and April-May in Quebec

"In the first instance, the leadership stubbornly refused to raise the independence slogan till the very eve of the outbreak of an independentist mass movement. In the second instance, the leadership of the section stubbornly clung to concentration on the language slogans in spite of a general strike of 200,000 workers with the appearance of workers control." (IDL, p. 32.) These would be serious charges *if* either were true. A few matters of fact have to be straightened out.

In the first instance, the section raised the demand for an independent Quebec *before* (as Germain admits) there was an independence mass movement. This would make it a rather strange example of "tailending" unless Germain has a new theory called "tailending from in front." This second theory has also been called *leadership*, which is an excellent description of the role of the Canadian section not only in the independence movement, but also the language movement, the struggle in the CEGEPs against the 82 days, etc. As for April-May, a few things have to be settled.

The April public sector strike was a life-or-death struggle for the unions against an attempt by the bourgeoisie to lower their standard of living by means of an incomes policy. It involved roughly 210,000 workers predominantly from the public sector. It was broken after 11 days by law 19 which made it a crime to strike against the government. The May strike involved approximately 100,000 workers including many from the private sector. It was touched off by repressive government action against the unionists and unions which led the April strike. During the 9 days that the strike lasted there were several examples of dual power at Sept-Iles and elsewhere where the workers held the upper hand in the balance of power. What was the section's response to these events?

"While completely supporting the April struggle, the LSO pointed out these weaknesses, and called for the reestablishment of a daily strike paper, for mass demonstrations and other actions designed to strengthen the strike and win over public opinion. It also pointed to the absence of a political party able to give expression to the workers' demands." (Draft Quebec Resolution, LSA/LSO Discussion Bulletin 1972, Number 20, December 1972, p. 18.) The section also launched solidarity actions in the schools and printed a special issue of *Liberation* which sold 2400 copies. They launched similar work in May. This hardly sounds like clinging stubbornly to the language issue. These questions of fact have never been challenged by the RCT which is certainly as ready as Comrade Germain to hang the majority of the LSA/LSO for "tailending" and "backsliding."

Comrades seeking more information can find, among other places, in the Draft Quebec Resolution from which Germain generously quotes *part* of *one* sentence. This method of selective quotation, or to be precise, selective non-quotation, plays a major role in Germain's section on petty-bourgeois nationalism.

"TAILENDING PETTY-BOURGEOIS NATIONALISM"

What Role for Nationalism of the Oppressed in the 20th Century?

"With the epoch of imperialism, nationalism *as a rule* becomes reactionary, whether it is 'purely' bourgeois or petty-bourgeois in character." (IDL, p. 32, his emphasis.) "In the best of cases—when advanced among oppressed nations—it is a narrow parochial substitute and cover for the programme of the permanent revolution, i.e., national and social emancipation. In most cases—when advocated by the capitalist class or its ideological representatives—it is a thoroughly deceptive and mystifying ideology to prevent and retard independent class organization and class struggle by the workers and poor peasants." (IDL, p. 33.) Is this true?

Nationalism is the ideological expression of the will of nations to self-determination. It is, however, an insufficient tool. While a capable expression of the tool necessary to do the job of winning real, as opposed to formal, national liberation prior to the age of imperialism, i.e., national solidarity, nationalism can no longer play this role. The only road to national liberation in the age of imperialism is through socialist revolution which certainly falls outside the scope of nationalism *per se*. But what exactly does this simple realization mean in regard to our concrete tasks as revolutionists? Ger-

main has an answer.

After explaining that we make a differentiation between the nationalism of the oppressed and the oppressor, Germain proceeds to outline what attitude to take to the nationalism of the oppressed. "But all these considerations do not imply a support of bourgeois or petty-bourgeois nationalism of the oppressed nationalities, leave alone 'unconditional support.'" (IDL, p. 33.) This is the essence of Germain's position on nationalism. It stands in seeming contradiction to one he has previously put forward on the national struggle, nationalism, and the nationalist leaderships.

"Revolutionary Marxists have no confidence in bourgeois or petty-bourgeois nationalists carrying the struggle against imperialism *to its final conclusion*, or starting to build socialism. But the absence of illusions does not in the least prevent revolutionary Marxists from *giving critical support to such forces* in their struggle against imperialism—as long as they fight at the head of the masses." (MVU, p. 54, my emphasis.) Here Germain is singing a different song. This stands as an answer to his new opinions about the anti-imperialist struggle and the nationalism of the oppressed, as well as a slightly different stand on the question of final conclusions. This quotation becomes more revealing as it continues.

"It is the duty of revolutionary Marxists to strive for an independent class organization of workers and poor peasants, and to educate them in the spirit of distrust towards the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois leaders of the national movement. In other words, it is the duty of proletarian revolutionists to struggle for hegemony inside the national movement. *But they cannot do this if they do not recognize that this movement is genuinely revolutionary and progressive, and that it must be supported against imperialism.*" (MVU, p. 54, my emphasis.) This outlines our general conception, but how do we proceed? Germain had an answer. The quotation is from his elaboration of the correct policy for revolutionists in the Black struggle as opposed to the Healyite position.

"On the other hand, if socialists, as is their elementary duty, support the revolt of the Negro masses regardless of its leadership, and tell them: 'After the horrible oppression you have suffered at the hands of the white rulers of this country—unfortunately supported by the poor whites too!—you have the right to choose for yourself either the objective of racial equality or of separation; we shall support your freedom struggle under any conditions'; in that case the Negro masses will begin to listen to these socialists and will at least believe that they are *genuinely* opposed to white supremacy; and *by the very logic of their progressive nationalist struggle*, they will then *reach*, with the help of revolutionary socialists, *genuinely revolutionary, internationalist and socialist conclusions.*" (MVU, pp. 61-2, his emphasis.)

This is a far cry from "nationalism as a rule becomes reactionary," yet the claim might be made that Germain thought that concept of the progressive nature of the Black struggle applied only to the Black struggle. This is his present position on the question. However, a few quotations from Trotsky and Marx *as quoted by Germain* against the Healyites ought to settle the point of whether he considered them an exception or part of the rule.

"Trotsky: 'I believe that the differences between the West Indies, Catalonia, Poland, and the situation of the Negroes

in the States are not so decisive . . .'" (MVU, p. 63).

Germain on Marx: "The historical parallel which leaps to mind is the present situation in the U. S. A. and the situation in Britain in the early seventies. 'And most important of all: every industrial and commercial center in England now possesses a working class population *divided* into two *hostile* camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. . . . His attitude toward him is much the same as that of the "poor whites" to the "niggers" in the former slave states of the U. S. A. The Irishman pays him back with interest in his own coin. He regards the English worker as both sharing in the guilt for the English domination in Ireland and at the same time as serving as its stupid tool.' (Letter from Karl Marx to Siegfried Meyer and August Vogt, April 9, 1870. In *Selected Correspondence*, International Publishers, p. 288 Emphasis in the original)

"Replace 'English domination in Ireland' by 'white supremacy' and you have a near perfect analogy with the situation in the U. S. A." (MVU, p. 94.) Certainly, and replace "white supremacy" with "English Canadian domination in Quebec" and you have a near perfect analogy! Replace it with "Spanish domination of the Basques" and again you have a near perfect analogy. This will hopefully settle the exceptionalist progressive nature of the Black struggle for nowhere in his polemic against the Healyites did Germain ever indicate in any fashion that the progressive nature of Black nationalism was in any fashion unique or exceptional. What does all this mean as it pertains to our general understand of and our tasks in the national movement?

Our Attitude Toward Nationalism and the Liberation Struggle

We support the nationalism of the oppressed as progressive while at the same time we realize it is insufficient to the task of winning real national liberation in the age of imperialism. We also grant critical support to petty-bourgeois and bourgeois nationalist leaderships when they fight at the head of the masses. We understand, however, that in the final analysis the masses must break from both nationalism and nationalist leaderships in order to win true national independence. It is on this basis that we are opposed *in an historical sense* to nationalism as we understand that the *final* liberation of humanity can only proceed on a *world* basis. We reject a formalistic and schematic interpretation of this policy for that would reduce us to Luxemburgists. We would be in the position of formally supporting the right to self-determination, but would in practice end up by opposing its manifestations. This type of formalism is foreign to the traditions of revolutionary socialism. It is our duty as revolutionary socialists to involve ourselves in the movement for national liberation.

"From this dialectical combination of tasks, the SLL (like the ultralefts against whom Trotsky was polemicizing in 1937) hold only to the necessity of political struggle against the bourgeois or petty-bourgeois nationalist leadership, and *precisely because* they refuse to become actively involved in the movement for national liberation, this political 'struggle' against the traditional leadership of the nationalist movement remains largely on paper: in

actual fact if the attitude of the SLL leadership were to be duplicated by the revolutionists in the colonial countries, it could only lead to their abandoning the national movement to these treacherous leaders and helping to consolidate their grip." (MVU, p. 56, his emphasis.) That was Germain's theory then; however his latest theoretical expedition is headed in a different direction than his previous efforts.

Germain's New "Improved" Theory of Nationalist Exceptionalism

Germain assures us that the "Leninist opposition to nationalism is not an abstract and formal principle but starts . . . from a 'clear notion of the historical and economic circumstances.' This is why there can be some exceptions to the rule based on exceptional 'historical and economic circumstances,' i. e., those of oppressed nationalities which do not yet possess their own ruling class, or have only such a miserable embryo of a bourgeoisie that, in the given and foreseeable future, it is excluded that this embryo could actually become a ruling class without a complete disintegration of the imperialist structure. The best example of such exceptions are of the Black and Chicano nationalities inside the United States." (IDL, p. 34.) While the main points of his argument have already been taken up, i. e., the exceptional progressive nature of Black nationalism, there are a few other questions to be answered.

First, how does what Germain poses after the "i. e." flow from the traditions of revolutionary Marxist thought. In other words, which Marxist has previously propounded this theory in part or as a whole? It is interesting, to say the least, that this point never appeared in the polemic with the Healyites, especially since there were two chapters on related issues and the SLL most certainly does not hold this position. Nor does Germain bother or attempt to quote Lenin or Trotsky on this point. There is but one possible reason. While no one is opposed to theoretical groundbreaking, the pioneer has the responsibility to demonstrate how the new theory proceeds from the continuity of revolutionary socialist thought. Since a similar burden of proof does not rest upon a person who is quoting an established theoretical position upon which all are agreed, it has long been a favorite factional trick to slip in a new theoretical deviation from Marxism under the guise of reiterating a previously stated position. Having done this, Germain proceeds to apply his theory.

"It is clear that neither Quebec, Catalonia, the Basque country, India, Ceylon nor the Arab nation can be classified as exceptional. All have their own bourgeois class. Many even have their own semi-colonial bourgeois state. To support nationalism within these nationalities, under the pretext of supporting anti-imperialist liberation struggles . . . is to lose the 'clear notion of the historical and economic circumstances,' to lose sight of the class struggle. . . ." He continues that "To defend the notion of 'unconditional support' for Quebecois nationalism, Arab nationalism, Indian nationalism, or Ceylon nationalism, is to disarm the workers and poor peasants of these countries in their class struggle against their own bourgeoisie. . . ." (IDL, p. 34.) Once again we are left with some questions.

Germain proceeds in this section as if his polemic against the Healyites had never been written. Does he still agree

with his quotation from Trotsky? "I believe that the differences between the West Indies, *Catalonia*, Poland and the situation of the Negroes in the States are not so decisive. . . ." (MVU, p. 63, my emphasis.) Does he still consider the national liberation movement and nationalism of the oppressed nationalities as "genuinely revolutionary and progressive"? Does he still believe that refusing to become actively involved in the national movement "could only lead to . . . abandoning the national struggle"? This is the critical question, *for the position put forward by Germain can only lead to sectarian abstention from the national struggle*. Starting from denying the revolutionary potential of nationalism when led by the bourgeoisie of an oppressed nation, even though he polemicizes against this very position, Germain has lost sight of the differences between formal and real independence.

"Many of them even have their own semi-colonial bourgeois state." (IDL, p. 34.) This plays into the hands of both the Stalinists and the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois nationalists. Both these currents claim that it is possible for an oppressed nation to win national liberation without proceeding to a socialist revolution. The theoretical extrapolation possible from this quotation and the general thrust of Germain's views on this position is that the struggle for national independence and thus the progressive character of nationalism ceases with the acquisition of a national bourgeoisie by any means. Unless it is Germain's contention that the present series of nationalizations of U. S. corporate property in Latin America, to give one example out of many, have nothing to do with the national aspirations of the Latin American people and the struggle against imperialism, then he stands on shaky ground. He has no other explanation for these events in any form whatsoever. Revolutionary socialists have always recognized that while the nationalism of the oppressed can be diverted into varied other channels than the anticapitalist by the bourgeoisie (cultural nationalism, Black capitalism) or even into reactionary forms (national chauvinism against other oppressed nations), *the thrust of the nationalism of the oppressed is as a rule progressive*. This is the reason why Germain's formulations based on his theoretical diversion from Trotskyism can only formulate incorrect positions.

Germain "Rearranges" the Combined Revolution

"In that sense it is inadmissible to identify national oppression inside imperialist countries with national oppression inside colonial nations. The whole notion of applying the formula of permanent revolution to the imperialist countries is extremely dubious in the best of cases. It can only be done with the utmost circumspection, and in the form of an analogy." (IDL, p. 34.) This statement bears little relationship to reality. One of the critical points of revolutionary strategy in an imperialist nation which holds within its national boundaries oppressed nations is an evaluation of those nationalities and a correct strategic orientation to bring them into the revolutionary process. This is based on the simple fact that unless these questions are approached correctly by revolutionary socialists, there will be little, *if any*, chance of making a socialist revolution. Nor are these oppressed nations outside the influence of the permanent revolution in spite of Germain's best efforts to prove otherwise.

"Inside imperialist nations, national oppression does not have the same function." (IDL, p. 34.) Germain then explains that the Polish and Finnish nationalities enjoyed a higher cultural and economic standard of living than their czarist Russian contemporaries. "The same applies for the Basque and Catalan nationalities inside Spain, before 1936 and partially even today. National oppression has not stopped or thwarted capitalist development or industrialisation in these oppressed nationalities." (IDL, p. 35.) This recitation of facts leaves a few questions to be answered.

The major question is what relationship is there between the fact that the Poles, Finns, Basques, and Catalans were in an industrialized geographic area and the applicability of the permanent revolution? Certainly, Germain isn't going to deny either that the majority of such oppressed nationalities are more usually found at the bottom of the wage scale (Blacks, Chicanos, Quebecois) or that the bourgeoisie of the oppressed nations he mentioned are equally incapable of leading the struggle for national liberation to a successful conclusion. Nor is he in a position to deny that the industrialization or higher economic standard of living have often rested on either a geographic prerogative (Poland and the trade with Western Europe) or the result of foreign bourgeois investment. Therefore, all Germain has produced are a few exceptional cases which are historically interesting, but do not alter the basic postulates of the permanent revolution. Germain's strategic assumptions, which flow from an attempt to pose the exception as the rule, thus have little to do with the objective situation in the world today.

A New Strategic Turn

"In semi-colonial and colonial countries, democratic demands generally have the weight of transitional demands. It is impossible to realize them under capitalism, at least in their collective essence. In imperialist countries, this is not true. Democratic demands will normally not be granted by the decaying imperialist bourgeoisie. But nothing organically . . . prevents the bourgeoisie . . . from granting them. . . ." (IDL, p. 35.) This includes national independence.

". . . given a prerevolutionary situation, a powerful upsurge of the workers' struggle, a concrete danger of a 'workers' republic' being set up, there is no fundamental class interest which would prevent imperialism from transforming any such nationality into independent puppet states." (IDL, p. 35.) This thesis gives rise to three questions: first, can the bourgeoisie of an imperialist nation grant democratic demands and are they capable of playing an anticapitalist role; second, is the bourgeoisie "organically" prevented from granting transitional demands; third, would the initiation of a puppet state of necessity impede the struggle?

"The struggle against national oppression is not an anti-capitalist struggle. It is a struggle for a bourgeois-democratic demand." (IDL, p. 30.) This statement of Germain's stands in contradiction to that about democratic demands in colonial and semicolonial countries having the weight of transitional demands. There are less fickle authorities on the question. "*To fight for the possibility of realizing an independent state is a sign of great moral and political awakening. It would be a tremendous rev-*

olutionary step." (MVU, p. 63, emphasis added.) In these words Leon Trotsky gave his opinion of the anti-capitalist potential of the struggle for a separate Black state in an attempt to end national oppression of the Black population. Given that the bourgeoisie can grant such a demand, they most certainly would not grant it lightly. What of transitional demands in general?

Germain implies that unlike democratic demands the bourgeoisie is organically banned from granting transitional demands. This must be merely a sloppy formulation. It is extremely doubtful that he holds the ultimatic approach to transitional demands which have characterized the work of the GMR or the IMG. Both of these groups tend toward viewing transitional demands not as a means of allowing the masses to act ahead of their own consciousness, but rather as a bloc of ultimatic demands which are raised in abstraction from the class struggle and directed not at the consciousness of the masses, but ahead of it. That is, they pose their demands away from the consciousness of the masses, and toward the already radicalized. This is not the transitional method and leads to a sectarian position on the real struggles of the masses as opposed to the ideal. This attitude could lead to a refusal to recognize the value of formal national independence.

In spite of the fact that formal independence does not mean real national liberation, it represents a step forward. "It should be recalled here that Trotsky considered *national independence—even under the leadership of a Chiang Kai-shek—worthy of defense against imperialism. . . .*" (MVU, p. 55, his emphasis.) Above and beyond the general impetus given to other struggles by such a victory, the establishment of an independent state, even a puppet state, does not mean the end of the struggle. This is tied to the inherent weaknesses of such a puppet state. Given that the establishment of such a state may temporarily divert the struggle, if the struggle continues (as it must eventually) such a state lacks the ability to grant concessions to the workers upsurge that the imperialist state could. If the imperialist state intervenes directly, this tends to exacerbate the question. The overall possibilities for revolutionists are great. Germain's major concern here seems to be not the possibilities, but rather the problems.

The Combined Revolution and the Democratic Noose

"To relate proletarian demands to a 'later stage' presumably when the mass movement is 'more advanced,' is objectively to increase the danger of diversion. This is what Trotsky meant when he argued we must prevent democratic demands in imperialist countries from becoming 'a noose fastened to the neck of the proletariat.'" (IDL, p. 35.) Germain is raising a straw man while simultaneously managing to misquote Trotsky with regard to both intent and content.

No section of the Fourth International is planning to relate proletarian demands to a "later stage." Nor are they planning to isolate themselves in a sectarian fashion by ignoring the national struggle. What revolutionists face is a *combined* revolution in the colonial and semicolonial countries. Neither the Stalinist "democratic stage" which ignores the class dynamic nor the Healyite sectarian refusal to raise national demands can deal with the sit-

uation in the oppressed nations today. Therefore, all Germain has done is raised a straw man on this issue. What of his "democratic noose"?

The Trotsky quotation is in regard to work in a *specific* situation in a *particular* circumstance. Dealing with a certain stage in the development of fascism, it does not purport to be capable of definitively dealing with the question of democratic demands in all imperialist countries. It most certainly does not apply to oppressed nations as a group. Trotsky was quite specific about the role of democratic demands in the colonial countries.

"To the adventurist resolution of the February Plenum of the ECCI (1928) I already then counterposed a course toward the mobilization of the Chinese workers under democratic slogans, including the slogan of a Constituent Assembly for China. But here the ill-starred trio fell into ultraleftism; this was cheap and committed them to nothing. Democratic slogans? Never. "This is a gross mistake on Trotsky's part." Only soviets for China — not a farthing less! It is hard to conceive of anything more senseless than this — by your leave — position. The slogan of soviets for the epoch of bourgeois reaction is a baby's rattle, i.e., a mockery of soviets. But even in the epoch of revolution, that is, in the epoch of the direct building of the soviets, we did not withdraw the democratic slogans. We did not withdraw them until the real soviets, which had already conquered power, clashed before the eyes of the masses with the real institutions of democracy. This signifies in the language of Lenin (and not the philistine Stalin and his parrots): not skipping over the democratic stage in the development of the country.'

"Without the democratic programme — constituent assembly, eight-hour day, confiscation of the land, national independence of China, right of self-determination for the peoples living within it — without this democratic programme, the Communist Party of China is bound hand and foot and is compelled to surrender to the field passively to the Chinese Social-Democrats who may, with the aid of Stalin, Radek, and company, assume the place of the Communist Party.'" (*The Permanent Revolution*, Merit Publishers, 1969, p. 273.)

"Without the democratic programme . . . the Communist Party of China is bound hand and foot." A failure to understand the applicability of this quotation and a failure to act upon it means abandoning the national movement to a leadership which will betray it. It is in this direction, contrary to the positions and traditions of Trotskyism, that Germain is headed.

Which Road for the Fourth International?

The eighth condition for membership in the Third International states: "'A particularly explicit and clear attitude on the question of the colonial and the oppressed peoples is necessary for the parties in those countries where the bourgeoisie possess colonies and oppress other nations. Every party which wishes to join the Communist International is obliged to expose the tricks and dodges of its imperialists in the colonies, to support every colonial liberation movement not merely in words but in deeds, to demand the expulsion of their own imperialists from these colonies, to inculcate among the workers of their own country a genuinely fraternal attitude to the working people of the colonies and the oppressed nations, and to carry on systematic agitation among the troops of their own country against any oppression of the colonial people.'" (MVU, p. 93, his emphasis.)

The Fourth International has continued the revolutionary tradition of the Communist International's defense of the colonial peoples' right of self-determination. "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International" takes a step away from this tradition and a step toward abstaining from the most practical aspect of defending the colonial revolution — providing revolutionary socialist leadership to the colonial people in their struggle for self-determination. Germain, in this document, has systematically distorted the progressive potential of nationalism and the anticapitalist potential of democratic demands. If we abandon our support to the progressive nature of nationalism and the democratic programme, then we shall be bound hand and foot. And that means that we will have abandoned not only the colonial people, but also the traditions of revolutionary socialism.

July 18, 1973

A CONTRIBUTION ON THE DISCUSSION OF ANTHROPOLOGY

by Joe Traugott, Philadelphia Branch

I. *What is the Problem?*

Contemporary materialist anthropologists — Leslie White, Marshall Sahlins, Elman Service, Julian Steward, Kathleen Gough, and others — describe hunting and gathering societies as the simplest societies that can be studied. They point out that hunting and gathering societies are organized along male lines, not female lines. They describe hunting and gathering societies as patrilineal. This means that married couples live with the man's relatives. They also agree that hunting and gathering bands are basically egalitarian, and predate clan societies.

The ethnographic data concerning hunting and gathering bands raises several questions:

- 1) What terms accurately describe preclass society?
- 2) If hunting and gathering bands are patrilineal, does this contradict Engel's materialist method?
- 3) How did societies organized along female lines develop?
- 4) How did men gain control of society?

II. *Anthropological Terms*

Evelyn Reed, in her introduction to the Pathfinder edi-

tion of Engels' *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, has taken an important step forward by translating some of Engels' terms into contemporary English. This process needs to be continued.

Engels combined the evolution of social and economic systems into three categories: "savagery," "barbarism," and "civilization." Specific economic and social traits were attributed to each stage of human evolution.

Unfortunately, these terms have lost their scientific meaning. Today these terms reek of racist, ethnocentric, chauvinist connotations. For example, the Hopi of Arizona are not "barbaric," "savage," or "primitive." By the same token capitalist America is not particularly "civilized."

The general connotations of these four terms, despite our own scientific meanings, necessitates replacement with nondegrading scientific terms.

Marxist terms should clearly reflect the economy and social structure of a society. The Pygmies of the Congo have a hunting and gathering economy. Their society is organized into bands of 25 to 75 people. The logical term describing the Pygmies is not "savage," but "a hunting and gathering band." "Primitive" should be replaced with "preclass."

Four general types of social organizations exist in preclass society: primal hordes, bands, tribes, and chieftanships. No ethnographic examples of primal hordes have been discovered. The term "primal horde" is useful in describing the transition from primate to human society. Bands, tribes, and chieftanships will be clarified in conjunction with a discussion of ethnographic data.

The following list categorizes societies from the simplest to the most complex. Terms describing economy and social structure correspond to Engels' stages of evolution.

<i>Engels</i>	<i>Economy and Social Structure</i>
Savagery	Primal horde
	Hunting and gathering bands
Barbarism	Agricultural tribes
	Chieftanships
Civilization	Peasant societies
	Capitalism
	Socialism
	Communism

Engels devised terms for four different kinds of families: consanguine families, Punaluan families, pairing families, and monogamous families. Engels emphasized sexual relations in his definitions of these types of families. When Engels used the term marriage, he emphasized its sexual meaning. For example:

"1. The *Consanguine* family, the first stage of the family. Here the marriage groups are ranged according to generations: all the grandfathers and grandmothers within the limits of the family are all mutual husbands and wives, the same being the case with their children, the fathers and mothers, whose children will again form a third circle of common mates. . . ."

Engels only implies the economic and social relationships for each type of family. The result becomes difficult to understand.

Reed clarified some of the confusion by substituting the term "primal horde" for Engels' consanguine family. "Cross-cousin marriage" was substituted for Engels' term Punaluan family, or group marriage.

The term family implies a number of concepts: marriage,

an economic relationship; mating, a sexual relationship; residence, a housing relationship; and a division of labor.

Marriage was invented to help ensure the preservation of society. Marriage helps to regularize and systematize economic activities. Marriage ties expand the bonds of cooperation between social groups, and within the group. Marriage ensures the division of labor and tasks in the society.

All of the societies that ethnologists can study have some form of marriage. Among preclass societies (bands, tribes, chieftanships) the most common form of marriage is cross-cousin marriage. Cross-cousin marriage means that one marries one of mother's brother's children, or father's sister's children. This practice ensures that marriage bonds (economic ties) will exist and be maintained between bands, or with another clan.

Essentially Engels uses incest to define family types, rather than marriage (economic) relationships. The distinction between Engels Punaluan family (Reed's cross-cousin marriage) and Engels' pairing family is the degree of exclusion under the incest taboo. In reality the same economic relationships exist under both kinds of families. The ethnographic data shows that both of these kinds of families have cross-cousin marriage.

Logically Engels' Punaluan and pairing families can be combined into one category. The more accurate term is cross-cousin marriage.

Engels term monogamous family is also misleading. Monogamy usually means marriage between two individuals. Polygamy is marriage between three or more individuals. For example, cross-cousin marriage is monogamous (as opposed to polygamous). Similarly not all marriages under class society are monogamous. The Mormon of the Southwest were a polygamous society until such practices were outlawed. But in a short period of time the Mormon had become known as one of the most sexually oppressive societies.

A less confusing term would be "bourgeois marriage" and "bourgeois family." These terms reflect the economic and social relationships of the family under class society.

Integrating these clearer terms for marriage patterns into an evolutionary perspective, creates the following list.

<i>Evolutionary stage</i>	<i>Engels' term</i>	<i>Marriage form</i>
Primal horde	consanguine family	no marriage
Hunting and gathering band	Punaluan family	cross-cousin marriage
Agricultural tribes	Punaluan family	cross-cousin marriage
Chieftanships	pairing family	cross-cousin marriage
Peasant societies	monogamy	bourgeois marriage
Capitalism	monogamy	bourgeois marriage
Socialism	monogamy	bourgeois marriage
Communism	no marriage	no marriage

To clearly understand the development of preclass societies it is necessary to distinguish between kin groups and sodalities. Kin groups trace kinship and devise terms to express these relationships. Sodalities are groups which attempt to integrate different kin groups into a cohesive

whole.

A lineage is a kin group. It *consciously* traces social relationships to a common ancestor. The creation of lineages is one of the first means of integrating individuals into a society. Clans, one type of sodality, do not directly trace kinship. The common ancestor of a clan is usually a plant or animal. Rituals are developed around the clan's plant or animal. Clan membership requirements may be based on kin groups.

The Daughters of the American Revolution is a good example of a contemporary sodality which has kinship requirements for membership. A woman joins the DAR usually because her mother was a member. Few people can actually trace their kin relations to a participant in the revolution. Members do trace kin relations, for a generation or two. The family of a DAR member is a kin group; the DAR is a sodality which has its own activities which bind different kin groups together. The distinction between a kin group and a sodality (clan) is important to understanding the difference between bands, tribes, and chieftanships.

III. *The Ethnography of Hunting and Gathering Bands*

Hunting and gathering bands are the simplest societies ethnographers can study. The economy, as the name implies, is dependent on gathering fruits, vegetables, roots, and nuts and hunting or fishing for game. Today most bands are almost extinct; many have already vanished.

Examples of hunting and gathering bands are the Australians, the Tasmanians, the Ona and Yahgan of Tierra Del Feugo, the Tehuelche of Patagonia, the Indians of the Baja, the Philippine Negritos, the Pygmies, the Bushmen, the Northern Algonkian and Athabaskan, and the Andaman Islanders.

Elman Service, a noted materialist ethnographer, describes band society in the following way.

"The simplest, most rudimentary form of social structure, as a structure (thus excluding fortuitous or expedient groupings of the refugee and composite sort), is the patrilocal band. For this reason alone it could be scientifically assumed to be the earliest as well. It also seems to be the most practical form for foraging peoples who are below the demographic level of tribal society.

"It is truly an important, even astounding, fact that we find this social structure in all the major quarters of the earth and in such tremendously varied habitats as deserts, seacoasts, plains, and jungles, in tropical, polar, and temperate zones, with great variations in kinds and amounts of food, and with seasonal and yearly alterations in supplies." (*Primitive Social Organization*, pp. 107-108.)

Service continues in his book *The Hunters*, on page 34:

"The patrilocal type of band organization is created by two related rules or customs pertaining to marriage. First is *band exogamy*: one marries someone from outside one's own band. Second is *virilocal marital residence*: the married couple join the man's band, not the woman's (which would be *uxorilocal residence* in anthropological parlance) . . . The band is also patrilineal; the members are all related through the male line because of the residence rule."

Virilocal has the same general meaning as patrilocal (married couples reside with man's kin). Uxorilocal has

the same general meaning as matrilineal (married couples live with the woman's kin). The terms Matrilineal and Patrilineal will be used in this study because they are more understandable terms.

Service qualifies his assessment that hunting and gathering bands are patrilineal. Service claims that kinship really isn't consciously traced by hunters and gatherers. Since the band is patrilocal, it is also "defacto patrilineal." Speaking of tracing kinship, Service says, "But hunting and gathering peoples do not normally do this, and the composition of the band is understood by them as being formed by the residence rule; hence patrilocal is a better name for the arrangement than patrilineal." (Service, *The Hunters*, page 34.)

Why are Hunting and Gathering Bands Patrilineal?

The only plausible answer why bands tend to be patrilineal is that in general the activities of the men require more organization than the female activities.

Residence patterns aid the organization of the band. Patrilineality builds cooperation among the males of the band. Matrilineality builds cooperation among women. If the male activities of hunting and warfare require more organizational effort than the women's activities of gathering food, the band will probably be patrilineal.

This is easy to see when hunting and warfare are important activities. But this isn't always the case. The Yahgan for example exist mostly on shellfish that the women collect. The men go on fishing and hunting expeditions in large boats. But their catch is economically less important than the shellfish that the women collect. Hence the Yahgan tend to be neolocal in their residence patterns. This means that a married couple could set up residence in a new area, or live with either set of relatives.

Kathleen Gough says that roughly two-thirds of all hunting and gathering bands are patrilineal in residence. About 15 percent are matrilineal and 15 percent are neolocal. Bands which are neolocal and matrilineal appear to be those which were at least partially decimated by Europeans and disease. The typical band without European influences appears to be patrilineal.

Service summarized the reason for patrilineality in *The Hunters* on page 37:

"It seems likely that the importance of the cooperation of males in hunting and in warfare is a more significant factor. To hunt many of the animals, especially those in large herds, requires the close collaboration of several men, just as does warfare. The women's gathering activities, whatever their significance to the society, ordinarily do not require the delicate coordination of several people. Thus women could be lost to their own band when they marry, and others gained, without weakening it so much as it would be weakened by breaking up the teams of brothers and cousins who grew up together."

IV. *If Bands are Patrilineal, does this Contradict Engels' Method?*

The ethnographic data indicates that patrilineal residence evolves before matrilineal residence and before the evolution of clans. Does this contradict the materialist method of Engels?

Evelyn Reed, on page 8 of her introduction to Engels, states the principle behind the Marxist analysis of pre-history. "Social institutions are not unchanging or eternal

but come into existence at certain periods of history as a result of specific socioeconomic conditions."

Using this principle it is clear that band society does not contradict Engels' analysis.

A sexual division of labor occurs when the hunting of animals is invented. When meat (grubs, tadpoles, frogs, and bugs) is collected, no division of labor is necessary. Both men and women, with the help of older children, care for children and infants and are collectively responsible for educating the children.

The creation of a division of labor separates band type societies from the primal horde. The initiation of a division of labor probably corresponds to the invention of marriage—that is regularized economic ties with other bands. Marriage and a division of labor separate band level organization from the primal horde.

The logical division of labor was for men to hunt and women to continue to collect vegetables, fruits, and some animals. The rise of patrilocal residence is a byproduct of the original division of labor and the organizational needs of that division.

This does not imply male supremacy. Hunting and gathering bands have a division of labor based on equal amounts of labor. Child care is a communal responsibility. Hunting and gathering bands are the best examples of "primitive communism." A better term might be "pre-class communalism," or "band communalism."

Band communalism means that there is social ownership of the means of production (the berry patch and the herds of animals) and an equitable distribution of tasks and the products of labor.

V. *How does Matrilocal Residence Arise from Patrilocal Bands?*

When agriculture is discovered it begins to replace the gathering of vegetables as a subsistence activity. This is because agriculture is generally more efficient and reliable than the gathering of foodstuffs. Agriculture makes larger populations possible. As the size of the society grows, so does the organizational needs.

Soon exogamy, cross-cousin marriage, and residence patterns can no longer integrate agricultural societies. Social integration is accomplished by a redivision of labor and the invention of kinship and clans. If this redivision of labor does not occur, the band grows too large and splits into smaller bands. If the redivision of labor occurs, the band is on its way to becoming a tribe.

As agriculture is perfected, it replaces gathering as a woman's task. Men continue to hunt. Agriculture becomes the major supplier of food. The organizational needs of the society shift to the women who are the agricultural workers.

Women generally tend the garden, have a common harvest, store food communally, and often cook in common. The Iriquois are an excellent example. Women's activities carry the organizational burden.

This causes a need for a change in the residence pattern. Matrilocality, not patrilocality, is better in tune with the new division of labor. Consequently, matrilocality arises from the development of agriculture.

Matrilocality by itself is not sufficient to organize the new agricultural society. Kinship is consciously traced to systematize the social relationships of a society which now has hundreds of members and may not all live close

together. The agricultural society becomes matrilineal as well as matrilocal.

As different kin residence groups (lineages) develop and the geographical area increases, some means of drawing the different residence groups together is needed. Clans and other sodalities are invented to meet this need.

The invention of clans transforms the large agricultural bands into a tribe. A tribe is composed of lineages (residence groups) which consciously trace kinship and clans which unite several lineages into a social whole.

In summary, the invention of agriculture transforms the patrilocal hunting and gathering band into an agricultural tribe. Residence changes from patrilocality to matrilocality, to better organize the economic activities. Men continue to hunt and defend the tribe; but the greatest organizational requirements involve women's activities. Child care and education is still a joint responsibility. These organizational needs necessitate the conscious tracing of kinship and the invention of clans and other sodalities.

Examples of matrilineal-matrilocal tribes are the Cochiti, the Delaware, the Huron, Iriquois, Navajo, Western Apache, Cherokee, Choctaw, Hopi, Zuni, the Bush Negroes, and the Ashanti.

VI. *The Rise of Chieftanships and Class Society*

Agricultural tribes create the economic and social prerequisites for the creation of a social surplus. Consistent surplus is generally not possible for hunting and gathering societies. When tribes create surpluses, they begin the transformation to chieftanships. A chieftanship is a tribal society which has a high degree of economic specialization, distribution, and redistribution, as well as a new division of labor.

Not all tribes become chieftanships. Uneven and combined development sets in. Many tribes have a redistribution of labor and changes in the residence patterns, but they do not develop the high degree of specialization necessary for a chieftanship.

The matrilocal tribe ultimately develops economic specialization, distribution, and the beginnings of a social surplus. This necessitates a new division of labor. Hunting is replaced with the domestication of animals where this is possible. In purely agricultural societies, agriculture replaces hunting as a major provider of food. Women become the processors of food in the village, while the men leave the village to tend the fields and herds. Again, this division of labor is based upon equal amounts of labor.

With this new division of labor arises new organizational needs which could not be met by matrilocal residence. The society becomes patrilocal because this better meets the organizational needs of the men in the fields, and the organizational needs of warriors which become increasingly more important.

The clans of the tribe reflect the new division of labor. The clans become patrilineal. Kinship in the lineages is traced through the male lines. With the beginnings of a social surplus the society becomes patrilocal and patrilineal.

Religion becomes more spectacular. Ceremonies become grandiose. Religious activities are still based on the clans. But now the religious activities are based on the patrilineal, not the matrilineal of earlier agricultural tribes which were matrilocal.

A hierarchy develops in the patrilines. This hierarchy is based on the religious and ceremonial activities of the clan. As the surplus grows, this religious hierarchy becomes a bureaucracy which begins to play the same role as the clan did earlier. The clan used to be the organizational force of the tribe. Slowly, the religious bureaucracy, composed of men because it was based on the patrilineal clans, becomes the organizational force in society. The tribe has become a chieftanship.

The chieftanship is still a preclass society. But it is on the verge of becoming a class society. The religious bureaucracy grows with the size of the surplus. While the bureaucracy does not own the means of production, it controls the use of the social surplus. Huge religious edifices are built. The bureaucracy becomes a privileged caste. It organizes and controls the warrior castes. All of these activities take place under the guise of religious authority.

When a critical social mass has been reached, the bureaucracy can no longer control the society. A sexual division of labor can not handle the social tasks. A class division of society is necessary if the society is to advance economically. Thus the religious bureaucracy is in the social position to transform chieftanship society into a class society. Part of the bureaucracy, with the warrior castes, becomes the state apparatus. The new state apparatus works closely with the religious leaders who provide an ideology to rationalize the new property relations.

As the transformation to class society occurs, the clans and cross-cousin marriage are eliminated. The clans had already been subordinated to the religious bureaucracy. As the clans wither away, so does the system of cross-cousin marriage. The equality of the clans and cross-cousin marriage was no longer compatible with the inequality of class society. The state and religious bureaucracy now fulfilled the organizational role that the clans had held. The clans became useless social appendages and withered away. The clans and cross-cousin marriage were replaced with bourgeois marriage and the bourgeois

family.

Examples of chieftanships includes the Maya, the Aztec, the Masai, and the Ibo.

VII. *How did Men Gain Control of Society?*

Men gained control of society through the division of labor in chieftanship society. While this division of labor in itself was not inequitable, it started a chain of events which would eventually place men in control of the new state apparatus.

The division of labor in preclass society was in part determined by "biology as women's destiny." This was true for the division of labor which created band society, for the division of labor which created tribal society and the division which allowed creation of chieftanship society.

Biology as women's destiny was not oppressive in band and tribal society. It was the transition to class society which made biology an oppressive force. The labor was equally shared in band and tribal society. As chieftanships approached class relations, the equality of tasks began to break up. This whole process took centuries to finally arrive at class relations.

Thus the logical division of labor in tribal society, which allowed for the creation of chieftanship society, started an irreversible social process. Logical, equitable divisions of society dialectically became their opposite as society was transformed into class relationships.

Men gained control of society through the patrilineal clans which were a byproduct of the division of labor in chieftanship society. The religious bureaucracy which grew out of the ceremonial activities of the patrilineal clans would logically be made of men. It is this bureaucracy with the warrior caste which paves the way for the division of society into classes.

While class society transformed biology into a means of oppressing women, this does not mean that this situation is a permanent feature of future society. Class society also produced the technology which end oppression based on biology as a woman's destiny. Socialism will make the sexual division of labor a relic of the past.

July 21, 1973

THE DISCUSSION IN THE CHICAGO BRANCH

by Dennis Brasky, Chicago Branch

In his recent report for the minority on Vietnam to the Chicago branch, Comrade Don Smith touched on some points that the minority has been harping on for some time. These points, being not even a revision but a negation of the fundamental theses of revolutionary Marxism should in my opinion be shared with all party members. It would be interesting to see whether these are the positions of *all* comrades who support the IMT, or whether the comrades here in Chicago have drifted away from Trotskyism on their own.

I— *When Is A Workers State A Workers State?*

Our movement in the course of the 1940 fight against

the Shachtmanites, developed the basic criteria for determining what a workers state is. These criteria were more fully developed and sharpened in the course of our judgment of the nature of the revolutions in Yugoslavia, East Europe and China. They served us as the theoretical basis for our correct understanding of the Cuban revolution. These criteria are basically:

- 1) nationalized property;
- 2) state monopoly of foreign trade;
- 3) planned economy;
- 4) the old state apparatus (army, police) being smashed and replaced with a qualitatively new one committed to defending the above three gains.

In understanding that revolutions *had* taken place without our leadership we were able to retain citizenship in the real world in distinction to those former members of the Trotskyist movement who, as Trotsky put it in reference to sectarians, "had not learned to think."

We never saw any *one* of these criteria as more important than any other in determining the class nature of a state; we understood that it was a *combination* of all four, although of course one revolution could start off by nationalizing bourgeois property while another could start off by smashing the state apparatus and replacing it. The crux of the matter was that only after accomplishing all four criteria could we correctly bestow the label of "workers state" upon a country.

The comrades in Chicago have been fortunate to hear another method elucidated before the preconvention discussion and during the discussion at the summer school. The alternative method is that the main or even the *sole* criterion for a workers state is the *smashing of the old state apparatus!* Once this is done, the country is a workers state! All other criteria assume a secondary status. Thus, Cuba became a workers state not in the summer-fall of 1960, but in *January 1959!*; China not in 1952-53 but in *1949!*; East Europe the *minute* the Red Army crossed the border; and Russia the moment the insurrection was over.

This false position flows from the minority comrades' incorrect view of the state which was apparent for all to see when Comrade Dave Frankel came here to give a three-part educational on the Marxist theory of the state. Their basic thesis is that the state is a body of armed men not in the final analysis but *first, last and always!* This simplistic, "militaristic" view of the state can lead not only to false conclusions but to outright absurdities, e.g., the statement by a minority comrade that all that has to happen is that the Cambodian government's army be smashed and then Cambodia will be a workers state—albeit "monarchical, and with a feudal base!"

At another educational, Comrade Dick Roberts stated that until the summer-fall of 1918 Russia wasn't really a workers state in the sense that only at that time did it pass from workers *control* to workers *management* and state *ownership*. Thus, technically speaking, until the summer-fall of 1918, "Russia was still the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie." This brought forth a vociferous paroxysm on the part of the minority who, not understanding this as a developing *process* but as something *static*, could only continually ask in a sarcastic fashion, "you mean that Lenin and Trotsky were leading the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie?" Comrade Don Smith was so disturbed that he got up at this *public* educational conference and said that "If that's the case, I can't see how I can be in the same party as you!" (For a confirmation of Comrade Roberts' thesis by the arch-revisionist Trotsky, see *Writings of Leon Trotsky 1933-34*, "The class nature of the Soviet State," page 106.)

Ever since then, the minority comrades have insisted on continually asking, when did Russia become a workers state? *When?* What month, what day? (They haven't yet asked what hour of the day, but even that wouldn't surprise me.) The same with Yugoslavia, East Europe, and China. The comrades cannot see that sometimes the change from quantity to quality can't be noticed imme-

diately. *When* does an acorn become an oak tree? *When* does a teenager become an adult? We should remember that Trotsky was unable a priori and during the process of increasing bureaucratization to identify precisely *when* Stalinism had emerged definitively victorious over the proletariat of the USSR. To those who wanted to call for a political revolution he stated that it wasn't possible yet to see *how* consolidated the bureaucracy was. Only after the peaceful victory of Hitler in 1933 was Trotsky able to see that Stalinism had emerged victorious as early as 1924. (See *Writings of Leon Trotsky—1934-35*, "The Workers State, Thermidor and Bonapartism," pp. 166-185.)

This "militarist" way of thinking is the methodological root for (a) more emphasis being put on *military* than political preparation in the work of revolutionaries in Bolivia and Argentina; (b) the policy of "minority violence" as demonstrated by the Ligue Communiste behind the backs of the masses of workers, and (c) the statement by a comrade of the minority here some months back that sometimes "power *does* come out of the barrel of a gun"!!

II- Counter-Revolutionary, Yes, But Through and Through?

On the Vietnam discussion, Comrade Smith stated the party minority's difference with Mandel-Maitan-Frank-Sterne on the Stalinist character of the Vietnamese Communist Party (VCP). Agreeing that it most assuredly was and is Stalinist, Comrade Smith, and later on in the discussion other supporters of the minority, proceeded to present a different estimation of the essence of Stalinism than the Trotskyist position. "Of course Stalinism is counter-revolutionary, but not counterrevolutionary *through and through*; it *does* have some progressive, even revolutionary potential."

Trotsky used to say that in the final analysis one could compare the USSR under Stalin with a trade union that has taken state power. In the context of this analogy, we can ask, "Is George Meany counterrevolutionary, *through and through?*" Of course the old boy's counterrevolutionary, but in his thirty to forty year career he *has* supported strikes (two or three). Today he's giving \$1.6 million to the Farm Workers! This strike is objectively not only anticapitalist, but in struggle with the Teamsters' leadership, antibureaucratic! Without the financial aid of the AFL-CIO it would be very difficult to mobilize as many strikers as is now the case. Is George Meany thus *sometimes partially* anticapitalist and antibureaucratic? Should we print up a pamphlet on the semirevolutionary or even the semiprogressive potential of George Meany? (This wouldn't be very expensive—just a front cover and a back.) No, George Meany is counterrevolutionary. 100 percent. Through and Through.

To understand how Stalinism can be only counter-revolutionary and yet have "led" some revolutions we have to look at what is known as the "dual nature" of Stalinism. In my opinion a better term would be a *single* nature. This single nature is *status quo*. Stalinism has certain material privileges. When you have privileges you're on top and you don't want anything to change because you have nowhere to go but down. Stalinism doesn't want the world to go forward or backward. To prevent

it from going forward, it betrays revolutions: to not go backward (an imperialist invasion) it defends itself—*inadequately*. But when the enemy is very weak even an inadequate, half-hearted defense can lead to victory. (The USSR's victory over Hitler due to his spreading himself out too thin on a two-front war; the victory of the Yugoslavian revolution where the bourgeoisie seemed to melt away; the victories in East Europe, China, N. Korea and N. Vietnam where the ruling classes looked to an American imperialist army totally bogged down in Japan and West Europe.) But because humanity demands to go forward to socialism, and because Stalinism holds us back in the jungle of the death agony of capitalism heading towards barbarism, the latter is *totally* reactionary. Some of us tend to think of Stalinism as a being with the ability to use only one arm at a time: it uses its right arm to betray revolutions and its left to defend itself and the host that it parasitically feeds off. Against a weak enemy, a one-armed defense can be enough for victory, hence the successful revolutions in the East *despite* Stalinism. But in the West against the powerful imperialists one arm hasn't been and never will be enough. *Two* very strong arms, working together are necessary, and that's us and only us.

If Stalinism isn't counterrevolutionary through and through then what is it? The only description can be "bureaucratic centrism," a label which we discarded in 1933. Bureaucratic centrism basically means that while the current in question (in this case, Stalinism) hasn't definitively hardened in a counter-revolutionary mold, it's leaning that way, although it can be pushed over to a

revolutionary position. When we called Stalinism "bureaucratic centrism" we were *working within the CPs, to reform* them. If today Stalinism is a form of bureaucratic centrism, shouldn't we try to reform it? Push it to the left? If so, we should return to our 1933 position, and on the way back we should ask ourselves, "why did we waste all those years building independent Trotskyist parties and an independent Trotskyist international?"

When we say that Stalinism is counterrevolutionary through and through we mean that right down to its guts, in the marrow of its bones, Stalinism is inflicted with a fatal disease with absolutely no cure. There's absolutely no part of it that's healthy or that can be made healthy. A *new, completely healthy* element has to *replace* it; that's our role—to replace, not remold Stalinism.

If the VCP *isn't* Stalinist (as Mandel-Maitan-Frank-Sterne hold) or it *is* but isn't totally reactionary (as the party minority maintains) if while making some mistakes it's basically giving good leadership to the Vietnamese revolution, then why should we build an independent Trotskyist party in North (and South) Vietnam? If it's basically a good party or at least can be fixed up, why call for a political revolution to establish proletarian democracy? "*When, exactly*" did the VCP cease being Stalinist or counterrevolutionary through and through? Was it fairly healthy when it murdered our comrades? Was this all just a misunderstanding or were our comrades wrong vis-a-vis the VCP? How wrong: were we objectively counterrevolutionary or even worse, were we counterrevolutionary, through and through?

July 20, 1973

INSULARITY

by Arthur Maglin, Upper West Side Branch,
New York Local

Let me start by stating my agreement with most of what has been said in criticism of the Internationalist Tendency and the other overtly workerist trends within the party. However, I would like to know how the party leadership is going to answer the organizational charges they have raised. In particular, how can it possibly be justified that the ratio of members to delegates for the 1973 convention has risen from 7-1 to 15-1 since the 1971 convention without a comparable growth in the overall size of the party? Also, why were so many dozens of comrades sent into the Oakland-Berkeley branch right after the last convention? On the face of it this last maneuver looks very much like an effort to communicate a pre-judgment on party loyalty to a group of dissenting comrades and seems like a deliberate effort to demoralize them through organizational means. Also, why wasn't the undoubtedly combinationist Proletarian Orientation Tendency given representation of their choice on the National Committee as the equally combinationist Abernites were back in the 1930s?

I think that the comrades of the Internationalist Tendency make a valid point when they point out the insularity that has been developing among the full-time leadership of the party and I say this with all respect that is properly due these hard-working comrades. I think that the I.T. and the other overtly workerist trends within the party will not be too happy about my thoughts as to what the causes and consequences of this insularity are, however, especially since I view the I.T. and the others as a logical extension and even more conservative spin-off of a problem in the party's development which arose first among the party's leadership.

The principle cause of this insularity is a conservative estimate as to the extent, breadth, and impact of non-union and nonindustrial struggles—that is, a tendency on the part of the leadership itself towards workerism. This was codified, I think, in the "Worldwide Youth Radicalization" document, although the problem is years older than this document and has manifestations that predate it. The youth radicalization document incorrectly views

the new radicalization of youth to have an escapist, non-struggle wing. In my opinion, this amounts to the writing off of the broadest and biggest, albeit least politically developed section of the youth radicalization. Since it was written off as unimportant, no systematic discussion of how to reach this layer was ever undertaken either in the party or in the YSA.

One of the main consequences of this error has been our inability to fully implement in a serious fashion the rest of our adopted line on the worldwide radicalization of youth. Our campus fractions have constantly been gutted in favor of building up our organizational apparatus. We have been weakening our base to build up the superstructure. That kind of mistaken sense of proportion can only come from a leadership that has begun to isolate itself from external work for prolonged periods of time. When one conservative error in methodology is made, others follow. The organizational insularity of the leadership became both product and perpetuator of this incorrect methodology.

The party leadership misestimated the situation with regard to the women's liberation movement. After first hesitating overly long about involving the party in the women's movement at all, the party leadership wound up rapidly developing an underestimation in practice of the possibilities for the party's involvement on other feminist issues in addition to the abortion struggle with the ultimate result of leaving us cut off almost entirely from the women's movement for the past half year. The leadership in practice missed the main point about the current rise of feminism, namely that women are becoming radicalized through the development of generalized feminist consciousness. It saw the abortion repeal campaign as being broader in its appeal to the population than feminism, which was true in terms of public opinion polls perhaps (depending on which polls one interpreted in what manner), but was never true in terms of willingness to engage in struggle. The party leadership wound up coming close to trying to substitute an abortion movement for a women's movement. This was, I believe, a conservative, abstentionist error.

The party leadership has now gone on to repeat this conservative, abstentionist, and insular course with re-

gard to the gay liberation struggle, giving gay liberation a super-low priority on the party's agenda.

The underlying workerist motivations for all of this has been given a confused, overt expression, I think, in the Political Committee's "Draft Political Resolution," which states:

"There are no general openings in the labor movement at this time that would justify a policy of colonization of our members into the unions. Our best method of reaching radicalizing workers in the unions at this time is through our general propaganda efforts.

"At the same time, branches should strive to maintain comrades in industries that are important to the political life of the city where the branch is located" (p. 21).

Despite the truth of the first two sentences, the P.C. contradictorily implies that there is some virtue to be gained by wastefully maintaining comrades in industries which may or may not be unionized and which may or may not have been affected by rank-and-file movement just so long as these industries are somehow important to the political life of the city where the branch is located. This is not so very different from the European document's emphasis on implanting comrades in factories regardless of the ups and downs of the class struggle among the workers. The party leadership seems to have a milder case of the Parisian workerist flu and the case is not improving.

Ultimately, the party leadership is acting as if the movements of our time are somehow inherently or in the final analysis unimportant and have no potential for going all the way, that we are in these movements just for the purpose of accumulating cadres for the "inevitable" union battles to come (such as the defense of the workers standard of living and organizing the unorganized into the union movement). Lest we get caught by surprise, let me remind comrades that the Russian, Yugoslav, Chinese, Cuban, and Indochinese revolutions did not have union struggles as their cutting edge. It will take the working class activated in uncompromising struggle to take state power in the United States, but there is no inevitability about organizational forms connected with this undoubted fact.

July 22, 1973

JOINT STATEMENT OF THE INTERNATIONALIST
TENDENCY AND THE TENDENCY FORMED AROUND
THE JUNE 10 "STATEMENT OF SUPPORT TO THE
INTERNATIONAL MAJORITY TENDENCY"

The Internationalist Tendency and the Tendency formed around the June 10 "Statement of Support to the International Majority Tendency" hereby jointly announce the formation of an *INTERNATIONAL MAJORITY TENDENCY SUPPORTERS' CAUCUS* for the election of delegates to the convention in the branches and our joint participation as a single entity at the convention itself.

The basis for our Caucus will be the following resolutions:

1. The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe.
2. In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International.
3. The Building of a Revolutionary Party in Capitalist America.

Votes for these three resolutions as a unit, will be the sole basis for membership in the *International Majority Supporters' Caucus*. Our participation in the party's convention will rest on this basis and no other.

July 22, 1973

STATEMENT ON GAY LIBERATION DISCUSSION
by Harry Ring, Los Angeles Branch

The following is a statement which I made in the Los Angeles branch gay liberation discussion July 22. In addition, I stated that I favored separating the convention discussion on the question from the debate on the political resolution and counterresolution.

I feel this is necessary in order to have an adequate discussion of the gay liberation issue without interfering with or cutting across the debate on the political resolution.

I also stated that I favored separating out of the National Committee gay liberation memorandum the section on dress code and personal conduct. I think its inclusion in the memorandum injects an extraneous point into the debate around the question of gay liberation. Separated out, comrades can more easily vote on this point without regard to their views on the memorandum and the counter-resolution.

* * *

I have not yet thought through to a definitive conclusion my attitude toward the National Committee gay liberation memorandum and the counterresolution offered by Comrades Thorstad and Green.

I do, however, have a reasonably well thought out conception of what I believe our approach to the gay liberation movement should be.

I think we must make clear to our entire membership, and to the people generally, that we regard the emergence of the contemporary gay liberation movement as a highly progressive one and that we stand in full solidarity with it.

We should explain why the demand for full human and civil rights for gay people is totally justified and why we see the struggle for those rights as a significant contribution to the fight against the capitalist system and the manifold forms of exploitation and oppression which it spawns.

We should combat all those who oppose or fail to support the gay liberation movement with the prejudiced, reactionary argument that gayness is an illness or aberration and that gays somehow are inferior to other human beings.

We must oppose such views in much the same way that we oppose the myths of the "inferiority" of women or racial minorities. We should, in particular, condemn the reactionary opposition to gay liberation by the Stalinists and others in the radical movement.

We should reject the view that the gay liberation struggle is "peripheral" to the central issues of the class struggle.

I do not believe that the gay liberation struggle has the same social weight and potential in relation to the coming American revolution as that of the national minorities, of women, or even of the youth movement. But to assess the role of a particular movement or social strata as lesser than others is quite different from characterizing it as peripheral. I think it is apparent that the gay liberation movement is already a significant component of the radicalization and I am convinced its potential will further increase.

I think it is true that at the present time the opportunity for intervention into the gay liberation movement is on a local basis. But this does not preclude a national perspective in relation to such activity or national guidance and direction. And we have a national obligation in terms of what our press, publications and national spokespeople have to say on the question.

I believe we should seek to intervene in the gay liberation movement, and do so with our political conceptions of how the movement can be built and how its aims can be best advanced.

We should do this within the framework of our political priorities. But those priorities should not be permitted to become a rationalization for those who oppose or have serious reservations about intervening in the gay movement.

I believe that concern for the party's political image is as valid as the concern that allocation of forces for such work be determined on the basis of our political priorities.

We do not want to create the image that we are a gay people's party any more than we want to create the image that we are a women's party, a Black or Chicano party, or even exclusively proletarian. We are a working-class party which actively supports and seeks to recruit from all layers of the oppressed and exploited.

We should recognize that we have a good opportunity at the present time to recruit gay activists to our movement and should work to do so. Such recruitment must be on the basis of our full political program but should not be counterposed to activity in the gay liberation movement. Where gay people joining our party are involved in significant work in the gay liberation movement we have no reason to want or expect them to put such activity aside on joining our party.

Regardless of what decision is made by the coming party convention, I do not believe this will complete the task of developing a more adequate analysis of, and approach to, the gay liberation movement.

The National Committee memorandum contains a number of ambiguities and insufficiencies. This was indicated, I think, by the fact that several comrades who oppose intervention into the gay liberation movement felt that they were able to vote for it. I hope this proves to have been a misunderstanding on their part.

However, to the extent that ambiguities in the memorandum may represent hesitations or reservations on the part of the central party leadership, then we must recognize that this demonstrates the need for continuing discussion and education within the party as a whole. Such problems cannot be resolved simply by a vote.

I am not suggesting that there not be a vote at this convention. What I am trying to say is that the problem must ultimately be solved within a broader political context.

On the basis of the National Committee memorandum, I believe the central party leadership has a basically correct but insufficient position on the question of gay liberation. At the same time it is a leadership that in all

other key respects has earned my full political support. In such a situation I must see the basic problem then as one of winning them, so to speak, to my point of view on this particular question. This is a matter of a continuing exchange of views, not votes.

This is not the first time that the party is confronted with the need to develop an adequate analysis of a complex new political phenomenon. The discussions on Eastern Europe and China, ranging over a period of years, are probably the best known examples of this. These questions were resolved finally through a process of an objective, comradely exchange of views—factional opponents, of course, excepted.

Let me cite another example. When Evelyn Reed first began giving branch educationals on the question of the matriarchy and female liberation some 25 years ago, a good number of male comrades—and perhaps some females—freaked out. I don't know what the reaction of the party's central leaders was at that time. But I think

it would have created some thorny problems if she had insisted on putting her full thesis to a vote.

I certainly am not suggesting that we can or should spend a quarter of a century educating the party on the issue of gay liberation. The need for intervention is pressing. Nor do I have an abstentionist point of view in relation to the principal issues involved.

I have ideas and convictions on the question and, to the best of my ability, intend to press for them.

But I consider it important that all of us approach the problem in the most sober, objective way we can.

That means neither blurring over, nor exaggerating, the differences there may be between us. The goal must be clarification and arriving at common agreement. Because our party has so adequately demonstrated its revolutionary capacities, I am confident that when this question is resolved it will be in a manner consonant with our Marxist principles.

July 23, 1973

A CONTRIBUTION TO THE LATIN AMERICA DISCUSSION

by Rudy Zeller, Detroit Branch

The debate on Latin America is now in its fifth year. It is incredible that one of its main protagonists Ernest Germain in the document "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International" attempts to deny the basis of this debate. He states:

"They interpret that resolution as a universal call to 'rural guerrilla warfare,' later partially corrected into a call for 'urban guerrilla warfare.' Careful study of the resolution itself does not support this contention of the minority. There is no reason to deny that the 9th World Congress resolution on Latin America contains several elliptical and synthetic formulas on rural guerrilla warfare and continental civil war open to various interpretations, which try to encompass too many different variants and successive stages of struggle into a single sentence or a couple of sentences" (p. 5).

A rereading of the draft resolution flies in the face of the above contention. There are no "elliptical and synthetic formulas open to various interpretations." I quote from the draft resolution:

"The fundamental perspective, the only realistic perspective for Latin America is that of an armed struggle which may last for long years. This is why the technical preparation cannot be conceived merely as one of the aspects of the revolutionary work, but as the fundamental aspect on a continental scale, and one of the fundamental aspects in countries where the minimum conditions have not yet been met" (pp. 6 and 7).

"Even in the case of countries where large mobilizations and class conflicts in the city may occur first, civil war will take manifold forms of armed struggle, in which the principal axis for a whole period will be rural guerrilla warfare, the term having primarily a geographical-military meaning and not necessarily implying an exclusiv-

ely peasant composition of the fighting detachments (or even necessarily preponderantly peasant composition). In this sense, armed struggle in Latin America means fundamentally guerrilla warfare" (p. 7). These formulations are clear and exact and not open to various interpretations. They state clearly that armed struggle, meaning guerrilla warfare, is to be the main axis of our work in Latin America, including those countries where the minimum conditions have not been met. These are important contentions. They cannot be dismissed lightly because they might be elliptical and synthetic formulations. Comrade Maitan is more honest about the meaning of the draft resolution, as his report on the balance sheet of Bolivia at the last IEC meeting shows.

"That is why it was necessary to place the problem of armed struggle on the agenda, rejecting the conception that reduces armed confrontation to the final stage of a mass insurrection. It was necessary to prepare for a long and hard struggle acquiring—and this is the more likely variant—a continental dimension. The specific form of this armed struggle for an entire period could only be guerrilla war." (IIDB No. 6, p. 10.)

The debate, then, is not along the lines Comrade Germain insinuates in the document "In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International," that the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency is opposed to armed struggle, that we believe in a spontaneist armed insurrection and that in practice we leave the masses disarmed to confront the repressive apparatus of the bourgeois state. This insinuation is aggravated by the fact that the tendency has been reduced to activities that tailend as a principle. What can be more simple! If we raise tailending to a principle, how can we possibly understand the need for armed struggle! I do not want to deal with these important charges,

directed particularly at the LSA/LSO and thus indirectly at the SWP, because I think comrades in a better position will undertake such a project. I would only state here that these charges are one hundred percent erroneous.

No, we are not opposed to armed struggle! We are not opposed to guerrilla warfare! The history of our movement denies the validity of such charges. The differences lie in the fact that the question of armed struggle has been divorced from the concrete needs of the masses by the Mandel tendency. They do not see armed struggle flowing from the concrete actions of the masses themselves, first through armed defense pickets and finally to the barricades. This is exhibited by their confusion over the armed actions initiated by the Peruvian peasants led by Comrade Hugo Blanco to that of the Sallustro kidnapping. They are by no stretch of the imagination similar actions as Comrade Germain contends.

The first were actions that flowed directly out of the concrete struggles of thousands of Indians and were posed inside the organs democratically controlled by these Peruvian peasants. These actions were also formulated defensively to put the blame squarely on the shoulders of the repressive forces. The second was an action formulated and carried out clandestinely, in which the masses were only passive observers. These two examples in fact are diametrically opposed. This confusion on their part becomes clearer through the following quotation:

"But the specific interrelationship between the mass movement and armed struggle which characterizes the Cuban revolution (not necessarily in the form of rural guerrilla warfare, or rural guerrilla warfare only; different combinations will be possible under different social and geographic conditions in different countries) is likely to occur again wherever the basic starting points of the Cuban revolution are repeated, in other words wherever a repressive dictatorship suddenly stopping the rise of the mass movement in its tracks, will be challenged by a determined revolutionary vanguard, progressively gaining mass support and helping to relaunch mass mobilizations till the point of a successful overthrow of the dictatorship." (IIDB No. 4, p. 25.)

First, one must ask whether the above was the main lesson of the Cuban revolution? In any case, from this perspective, it is the revolutionary vanguard and not the masses themselves who must challenge repressive dictatorships, who then through their exemplary actions will gain mass support finally sparking mass mobilizations until the overthrow of the dictatorship. This logic is not Leninist and not Trotskyist. It is the masses from the outset (hopefully headed by the revolutionary party), who must challenge this repressive apparatus and take state power as the final consequence. These are the lessons of Bolivia. It was the masses that prevented a right-wing coup during the Torres regime, not the vanguard. It was the masses that held Torres in power, that brought about the formation of the Popular Assembly, not the vanguard. And in fact, it was the default by the revolutionary vanguard, because of this armed struggle strategy, that finally allowed Banzer to take power and smash the incipient organs of dual power. Comrade Germain wants to "inject" armed struggle into the class struggle and in most cases very inopportunistly and it flows from a mistaken conception of the objective factors affecting the subjective con-

sciousness of the masses. I will return to this point later.

Armed struggle in any variant including guerrilla warfare is a tactical question that must be subordinated to and that flows logically from a strategy. Armed struggle, as understood by reading the Transitional Program, does not have a singular definition or level of intensity as the MMF tendency imply. The level of intensity varies drastically depending on the concrete needs of the masses and the party and the particular conjunctural period of history. Comrades in the MMF tendency have raised the question of armed struggle to the level of strategy, subsuming all else to it. They have dogmatically equated armed struggle with the posing of the question of state power. This in no way reflects the reality of the class struggle in Latin America.

We think it is incorrect to raise guerrilla warfare to a strategy and moreover on a continental scale. What is the present conjunctural state of the class struggle in Latin America? First, can one say that its development is even on a continental scale, or that it was even at the time of the 9th World Congress? A close look at the actual events throughout Latin America clearly point, in fact, to a very heterogeneous development of the class struggle that in no way can justify the call for armed struggle on a continental scale. I believe it is clear that the tasks presented to the revolutionary vanguard in such distinct countries (both in terms of the objective factors weighing on the masses, and the subjective factors) as Mexico, Venezuela, Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina and Chile in no way can be covered adequately by the tactic of armed struggle. Tactics must be determined by individual sections and more importantly on the method of the Transitional Program. This "strategy" can in practice (and has in the case of the PRT-ERP) counterpose itself to the problem of party building and to the resolution of the crisis of revolutionary leadership at the *present* stage of development of our sections (that is no more than propaganda groups with no mass base or support). This singular emphasis on military questions is based on the need to make a "breakthrough" no matter what, *not* on the particular conjunctural situation of the class struggle, when armed struggle might become the question of the day. This type of methodology has placed politics, and the method of the Transitional Program on a secondary plane. It has already had disastrous consequences in Bolivia. In Argentina the methodology of both tendencies has been tested. The role of both parties is known. The history of the PRT-ERP has proven this contention correct and even Comrade Maitan in his evaluation of Argentina admits that the PRT-ERP very rapidly left their political work and their ties to the masses in the basement. Maitan, though, still contends that the problem is peculiar to the PRT-ERP and cannot be generalized, and that with more diligence on the part of comrades the problem can be overcome. Well, the above only points out that the debate continues and that comrades supporting the draft resolution are sticking by their contentions in the face of the experience in the class struggle in Latin America over the last three years.

The questions involved in this debate, then, are clear. The method of building revolutionary parties is at the core of the discussion. It is truly amazing that Comrade Germain begins his defense of the turn at the 9th World

Congress by the following:

"It is methodologically wrong and misleading to use the concept of Leninist party building as *an alternative* in debates about key tactical and strategic problems, posed by the development of the class struggle itself." (IIDB No. 4, p. 3.)

He then continues to cite three major debates within the Marxist movement in 1905, 1914 and 1930 to purport that the injection into the debate of a "Leninist strategy of party building" would mean refusing to line up with either side on the questions in debate, and that in fact Comrade Hansen (in particular) is guilty of the same in this present debate. That is, the Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency has never been serious in this polemic concerning Latin America! Comrade Germain, this is really fancy footwork! Is it not a fact that in the death agony of capitalism: "The historical crisis of mankind is reduced to the crisis of the revolutionary leadership"? (Transitional Program.) In other words, the building of a massive revolutionary party that has the sufficient weight, influence and program to resolve that crisis. The strategy of guerrilla warfare cuts across this task. This is our contention and the proven reality from the experience in the class struggle in Latin America these past three years.

* * *

Why do these comrades maintain their position in the face of events tested by the class struggle? It is my belief that it flows from a mistaken conception of the objective factors affecting the subjective consciousness of the masses. Other comrades have defined it as an adaptation to ultraleftism. I agree that it is such an adaptation; but the nature of this adaptation must be pinpointed. In this manner the above question can be answered.

Peter Camejo in his article "Why Guevara's Guerrilla Strategy Has No Future" initiated a discussion on this question. Under the heading of "Objective Events" Camejo takes certain principles of Guevarism to task. I believe that the MMF tendency have adapted to these same principles of Guevarism and we must, therefore, criticize them specifically for this adaptation. I quote from Che:

"The balance between the oligarchic dictatorship and the pressure of the people must be upset. The dictatorship constantly tries to function without resorting to force. Being obliged to appear without disguise, that is to say, in its true aspect as a violent dictatorship of the reactionary classes, will contribute to its unmasking, and this will deepen the struggle to such an extent that it will not be able to turn back. The resolute beginning of long-range armed action depends on how the people's forces fulfill their function, which amounts to the task of forcing a decision on the dictatorship—to draw back or to unleash the struggle." (*Che Guevara Speaks*, p. 82.)

Although comrades in the MMF tendency understand and would disassociate themselves from Che's position that the revolutionary vanguard must precipitate the fall of "bourgeois democracies" and thus cause the imposition of dictatorships, they do fall into Guevara's simplistic schema of the revolutionary process in Latin America. That is, that under the deepest repression, when all democratic rights are extinguished, when the police and the army control the streets, the peasantry and the proletariat are able

to overcome their illusions about the nature of their exploitation and are, thus, impelled forward in a conscious anti-imperialist and anticapitalist direction. This adaptation is not made explicit, but runs as a veiled thread throughout their arguments. It is a schema, which at the last world congress these comrades would have rejected outright, but today the logic of their course and in searching for justification for the turn at the congress, has lead them to adapt to. I will quote from the latest documents of the MMF tendency to support the above contention. Comrade Maitan in a report to the IEC last December evaluated the events of Bolivia and stated:

"The strategy of armed struggle should begin with the presupposition that, owing to the aid and intervention of imperialism, the enemy is equipped with sizable political and military resources, that it will be impossible to defeat them in relatively short battles, that the culminating stage of the revolution when large masses of workers and peasants mobilize will be preceded by other stages where armed struggle will be the task of sectors or nuclei of the vanguard. Thus the need for this specific form of armed struggle which is guerrilla warfare." (IIDB No. 6, p. 11.)

That is, the stages preceding the revolutionary overthrow no longer demand that the revolutionary party involve itself in the political activity and mobilization of the masses (building class struggle left wings in the unions, economic struggles, democratic struggles, etc.) as its major task using its entire Transitional Program; but, instead, have elitist vanguards carrying out armed action that will demonstrate to the masses that state power can be won. In other words, after exemplary actions by the vanguard, which demonstrate that the repressive apparatus can be defeated, the masses will understand that their day has come and will thus proceed to take state power (of course, the masses will be armed by the vanguard). The entire emphasis in the argument rests on the fact that the bourgeoisie has extensive means to repress the masses. *The political struggle, in practice, must therefore become secondary.* This is one of the logical outcomes of adapting to the Guevarist schema. We beg to differ, for the political struggle in all cases has been and will be the key task of the revolutionary party; because without winning the political struggle, that is, political hegemony in the workers movement and its allies, the revolution will not be made—dictatorship or no dictatorship.

This adaptation is also evident in the major resolution submitted by the MMF tendency. Germain argues against Comrade Lorenzo for his inability to distinguish a stable bourgeois democracy and a military dictatorship and states:

"So the opposition between Comrade Mandel's analysis and Comrade Lorenzo's does *not* consist in Mandel's alleged inability to understand the need for exploiting legal opportunities, nor in his inability to link such opportunities with the rise of the mass movement at a given stage, nor with his lack of concern for building the party. The opposition hinges on Comrade Lorenzo's lack of understanding of the difference between a *short legal interlude* of a year or two, between periods of rising or declining military dictatorships, and a whole *period* of 'constitutional systems of classical bourgeois parliamentary democracy' in which the working class movement can organize and grow gradually, progressively and legally.

(IIDB No. 4, p. 6.)

In his argument Germain makes an incredible mistake. In fact, he dismisses "a short interlude of a year or two, between periods of rising or declining military dictatorships" as if it meant little to the revolutionary party and the masses; for although he reminds us that he understands the importance of exploiting legal opportunities, his following analysis of Bolivia and the role of the POR (aside from the misrepresentation of the facts) does not take this short interlude of a year or two too seriously. Germain's entire argument does not base itself on the fact that this short interlude existed and the possibilities it opened up, but on the storm over the horizon, the coming repression. His eyes are firmly glued to the impending and inevitable coups! We agree with Comrade Germain for the need to explain the possibility of a right-wing coup and the importance of blocking such an occurrence. But how is that done exactly? Is it by supporting the attitude of the POR as Germain did just before Torres fell? I quote from an interview with Hugo Gonzales in the *IP* of June 14, 1971:

"But obviously this work cannot be capitalized on, or having any meaning in the long run, except in the context of preparing *our* (my emphasis—R.Z.) organization for armed struggle. In the present unstable situation we look on everything as temporary. The repression that is to come will signal the start of a new stage of armed struggle on a scale previously unknown here. . . . Fundamentally it is this stage *we* are preparing for by trying to take full advantage of the opportunities offered *us* (again, both are my emphasis—R.Z.) by the present situation.

What has happened to the masses? There is no mention of them. Everything the POR did was not to help prepare the masses to take state power, but preparing themselves technically to carry out armed struggle after a coup! This is crass sectarianism! That is the logic of the turn at the 9th World Congress. Again, how is one to block a right-wing coup? By exploiting the interlude *politically*, not by arming the vanguard and maybe even sections of the masses and then sitting back expecting a coup. It is done by mobilizing the masses *politically* in stronger and stronger actions, that finally lead to the question of state power. The masses will find the means to arm themselves; it is the job of the revolutionary party to arm the masses *politically*. Comrade Germain has adapted to the schema set down by Che. His revolutionary clarity has been clouded by this schema exemplified in his singular preoccupation for the coming coup and not the political opportunities opened up by the interlude.

This problem is even evident in the contribution by Comrade Maitan in the July 2, 1973 issue of *IP*. The above criticisms hold true for the following statement concerning Argentina.

"Revolutionary Marxists must systematically underline the precariousness of the 'democratic' interlude and the inevitability of armed confrontation. They must not only demystify all the parliamentary and 'mass-ist/spontaneist illusions,' but also—more precisely—insist on the need to prepare to respond to the inevitable attacks of the enemy, whatever form they might take. This means that an underground apparatus must be maintained; that under no circumstances must the special apparatus be given

up: that even during the stage of a democratic interlude the use of forms of armed struggle to counteract the repressive actions against the mass movements or the revolutionary vanguard must be envisaged" (p. 795).

The dangers of adapting to this schema are evident even in an organizational fashion here. The need to maintain an underground apparatus at all times. This adaptation, as has been noted already, has become evident even in the perspectives document on Europe.

I restate once more the major problem in conception that the MMF tendency faces. They mistake the objective factors that affect the subjective consciousness of the masses. They feel confident that the bourgeoisie's need for "strong" states, particularly of a military dictatorship variety, is the prime objective factor affecting the consciousness of the masses in Latin America (by extension also to similar situations around the world). This, in fact, is much too simplistic to fit the reality of Latin America today. It would be instructive to go back and reread the draft resolution. I believe, under the section covering the dynamic and role of the working class, a correct assessment was made of the main factors influencing it.

"If the broadest layers of the working class are still immobilized or neutralized and if the workers have not been able to play a substantial role in the revolutionary actions of recent years in certain countries, this is by no means a result of any degeneration or intrinsic weakness of the proletariat as a revolutionary force. It is the result of well defined concrete factors, such as the momentary prostration resulting from severe defeats and repression; the pernicious role of the trade union bureaucracies which are more and more integrated into the governmental structure, especially in certain important countries, the no less negative role of opportunist political leaderships enjoying prestige sometimes rubbed off from an international Communist tradition, the weight of unemployment which has continued to increase in recent years, and the dangers of reprisals in the event of struggles or strikes—which is a danger the workers are ready to face only if they see a real perspective for political change." (IIB, Disc. on L.A., '68 to '71, p. 3.)

As is stated the problem is not the degeneration or intrinsic weakness of the proletariat. The problem is an aged and old one: the crisis of leadership! This is clearly pointed out in the quotation. We cannot rely on the union bureaucracies nor on the Communist Party. This problem will not be solved by looking for short-cuts. The revolutionary parties in Latin America and around the world must take on these obstacles and defeat them *politically*, not by "armed struggle," "guerrilla warfare," "initiatives in action," etc. I quote from Trotsky in *Results and Prospects*:

"Politics is the plane upon which objective pre-requisites of socialism are intersected by the subjective ones. . . . Even in this. . . sphere, however, the proletariat is not absolutely free. Besides the subjective factors. . . the proletariat in carrying out its policy comes up against a number of objective factors such as the policy of the ruling classes and the existing State institutions (such as the army, the class schools, the State church), international relations etc." (p. 96-7).

The MMF tendency understands the above. They know

Peronism exists and what hold it has on the Argentine working class. They know the CP exists and that its reformist politics dominates many trade unions throughout Latin America. They know that even military regimes like that in Peru, have masked themselves cleverly in anti-imperialist phrase mongering to the point of buying off certain portions of the left. They know the UP exists in Chile and continues holding back the revolutionary

process, while the working class is breaking from the CUT controlled by the CP and forming their own industrial concentrations. They know all of the above. Yet, they continue proposing a disastrous course of armed struggle, meaning guerrilla warfare. Like Trotsky said it is politics, the politics of the Transitional Program that intersects the objective prerequisites with the subjective ones. Let us return to the road of Trotskyism.

July 20, 1973

THE UNITED FRONT AND THE LIGUE

by Fred Brode (Internationalist Tendency),
Houston Branch

Some people are born with a silver spoon and our movement was born with a call for a united front on our lips; a united front to defeat fascism. We called for a united front in which we hardly had a chance to participate. Nevertheless it was the correct tactic to advocate. This tactic is an integral part of our political arsenal.

Let us briefly examine this tactic. What is it? It is designed to achieve a measure of unity in action in the labor and political movements to defend the interests of the working class. It is also a form of intervention in the organizations of our political opponents. It is also an intervention on their part into our organization. This is the dialectic of the matter!

Let me remind you comrades that at the time of the rise of fascism in Germany we considered ourselves a faction of the Communist International which means we were oriented towards the various CPs, not to the working class with an independent program. Today it is different! We are engaged in building a revolutionary party and the various sections will make use of the Transitional Program as their objective conditions demand. Fascism is again on the rise in Europe; France in particular!

Tom Vernier disapproves of the way our comrades of the Ligue meet the problem. He charges them with discarding the tactic of the united front and of adventurism. Is he correct in his charge? Did he quote everything in the IP article pertaining to the problem? Check it out, comrades! I won't go into detail for you wouldn't believe me anyway; because you've been told anything we say is factional and therefore you may, or rather, you're supposed to discount it. You should scrutinize your arguments and rhetoric in the same way as you do ours!

In the mid-twenties and early thirties both working-class parties in Germany had large legal paramilitary organizations. Today this is not the case in France; to the best of my knowledge the CP in France opposes the creation of workers defense formations but the workers do organize to defend themselves when under attack by the fascists.

Let's go back to the united front! If a call for a united front is not answered with a positive response by the mass party or parties of the working class do you propose to abstain from the struggle? What would you have our French comrades do? Should they adopt your position? "It is better for us to get hurt than they!" Famous words

uttered by you on Lyons Avenue. Should they have called on the school-boy executives in the Ivory Tower on Charles Lane, NYC, the seat of the global Civil Liberties Union to receive the advice to defend bourgeois democracy? I don't know what other advice they could have obtained from them.

No! The French comrades studied the objective conditions and made their decisions. Actions speak louder than words! They could make their decision unencumbered by a baggage of pacifism. Mere advocacy of workers defense is not enough; initiative in the practice of it is necessary to show that Trotskyists are not idle blabblers!

Our French comrades gained prominence during the struggles of '68 which consisted in no small part of giving combat to the forces of the state.

Yes, our French comrades have a different heritage than the pantywaists of the YSA and SWP who are organized in a so-called Leninist-Trotskyist Tendency and seek the political leadership of the Fourth International!

I assure you comrades, no amount of quotes can make Lenin or Trotsky look like pacifists. You better look for comfort some other place! To change from the historical examples of the Russian revolution to the Spanish revolution does not help you. You cannot read history to make it serve your position; you only violate it if you try to apply a pattern on today's events. This is the true mark of a sterile sectarian. To theorize on building a revolutionary party is one thing, building one is another!

To build a party, revolutionists must engage in the day-to-day struggles of the working class. We cannot penetrate every industry nor can we penetrate every campus. The small number of cadres is no excuse for this or that orientation. The International Majority document proposes to orient towards the working class; the International minority document is critical of radicalized workers. That is the way I read the remarks on page six.

I reject the idea that a revolutionary party of the working class can be built with students or middle-class elements. I repeat, a revolutionary working-class party will be built by participating in the struggles of the working class and revolutionists are expected to show ingenuity and audacity in applying the Transitional Program.

De l'audace, de l'audace, toujours de l'audace!

June 26, 1973

CONFESSIONS OF A CADRE-KILLER: AN OPEN
LETTER TO THE RANKS OF THE PARTY BY A
MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONALIST TENDENCY

by Mark Lause, Houston Branch

Dear Comrades,

As Internationalists, we have fallen heir to many of the charges made against the "For a Proletarian Orientation" grouping of 1971. On and off the branch floor, we have been accused of being apolitical cliquists and of being fanatical automatons, of being too deeply immersed in abstract theory and of being theoretical illiterates, of being based upon organizational gripes and of having too many fundamental political differences with the Political Committee to merit consideration as a serious tendency, etc. Perhaps this confession could have been broadened to include more of my crimes if I were but sure of their nature.

However, one charge does apply to me personally, that of being a "cadre-killer." I confess to have had a hand in driving some of the precious few Trotskyists from our movement. My guilt has long weighted upon my mind and when I was confronted with the charge several days ago, I realized it was necessary to rise above all considerations of tendency affiliation and make my public confession to the ranks of the party. I hope that other comrades will do the same, regardless of their affiliation in the present internal dispute.

I must plead that, although undeniably guilty of this heinous crime of cadre-killing, I was a victim of my environment and might perhaps be one day totally rehabilitated. I was a juvenile at the time, comrades, not a member of our party but a member of the YSA. As a YSAer, I attended the 1971 party convention and educational conference where I became very impressed with the democratic norms of discussion within our party. After all, we never dreamed of such discussion within the old SDS!

After the convention at which I finally purged myself of the "mistaken" notions of almost every regional YSAer, I was assigned to regional work by the Chicago local. At this point, I could feel the adrenaline coursing through my limbs at the very mention of the '72 election campaign. Had the leadership of our movement assigned me to do a swan dive into the Grand Canyon, I would have been honored.

As the campuses were opening in late August, I was on my way to Wichita and Pittsburg in Kansas by way of St. Louis, Columbia, and Kansas City. While in Kansas City, the local recieved a phone call from Chicago to notify them that the Chicago branch organizer and a recent transfer from Detroit to Chicago were on their way to discuss a matter of great importance. (I will not give names; this would implicate my accomplices.)

When they arrived, the comrades began interviewing the members of the local as to their plans for the immediate future. I was not sure what was happening. My first fear was that the local was about to be folded, but I soon realized that this was not the case. Kansas City was too far away to be "troublesome" like the Wisconsin region which had been folded a few short weeks before. In any

case, all of the comrades in the local who were available were contacted and spoken to. I was the last.

The conversation was very short and to the point. The necessity of our comrades gaining experience in our movement was followed by the point that the only way such experience could be gained was by building the movement. The example of Oakland-Berkeley was given. Tremendous "branch building" opportunities existed in the Bay Area and, anyway, the old FAPO crowd was kicking up a fuss.

What an honor! To ask me, a lowly YSAer to take on such a momentous task! In moments of crisis, I always tend to respond with due caution: "When do you want me to go?" An hour later, the Chicago comrades picked me up at the home of a local member and dropped me near my home where I spent several days waiting while the Chicago leadership worked to arrange transportation for myself and two other comrades (from Bloomington) to get from the Midwest region to the West Coast. We were quite excited at the prospect of these "tremendous" possibilities on the coast. Perhaps the lull in the student movement which hit so hard in the Midwest did not affect the course of the radicalization in California. So we thought. So we hoped.

Once I arrived, I found out that the Cal campus was politically rather quiescent. One could always watch the hippies panhandle or the Hare Krishnas doing their hopping dance or listen to the gospel and revivalist music of the Jesus people. This all had the effect of culturally broadening the horizons of a small-town, Missourian but did little to add to my understanding of the "objectively anticapitalist" character of the psychedelic politics and hallucinogenic theorizing that went into the making of the "Current Radicalization."

We arrived in the middle of a meeting. We almost literally walked into the meeting with our hands raised. The Oakland-Berkeley YSA was then entering into its Tasks and Perspectives discussion; this was why we had been sent over half-way across the country.

Already the demoralizing effect of being "flooded" by comrades such as myself was beginning to show on some of the former supporters of a former minority tendency within the party, who were less aware of the real organizational norms of Bolshevism. They were socially ostracized and isolated. We, on the other hand, were caught up in convention-like atmosphere. Half seriously, we talked of such things as identification badges with our names and locals. People would get up in local meetings and preface their remarks with "I'm John Doe of the Boston YSA" and we would laugh.

Individually, and in twos and threes, we met with the then-organizer of the YSA, Comrade X (again, my accomplices should confess for themselves; I will not implicate them). He discussed the tremendous potential of the Bay Area and the real reason for our transfer: *to smash the minority*. We were advised to be careful who

we were talking to and to "keep it cool." If anyone asked why we had come to Oakland-Berkeley, we were to answer that the climate suited our tastes.

Apparently, the adherents of the former minority had been busily engaged in either regularly blackjacking the branch organizer or threatening to fire-bomb the hall and liquidate the branch prior to our arrival. Of course, they must have seen what was going on and ceased their factional activity the day before our arrival because we saw none of it.

I wasn't disillusioned, though. Not me. There must have been a reason or the party leadership wouldn't have done it, right? Meanwhile, the comrades who had supported the FAPO were continually attacked. They were shoved from the executive committee of the YSA by the influx and a slate vote, organized by Comrade X and his cohorts restricted their participation in the leadership of their local.

Of course, that was the YSA and not the party which I continued to worship. I knew that the party leadership was manipulating what was happening in the local. It didn't bother me. The revolutionary party has that right. "By any means necessary" means more than a YSA button. The youth should always be subservient to the needs of the party. I had no idea what was going on in the branch but I was certain that it required my presence. That I did not see my role as a hack, as a cadre-slaughterer, is no excuse. That I was unconscious of the effects of this upon comrades of the former minority did not alter the effect.

I'm not sure how many of us arrived between the convention and the end of September but it amounted to around forty or fifty. More were sent in but the surplus was simply sluffed off to other West Coast branches. Some were party members for whom I can, in retrospect, spare little sympathy; well they knew the reason for their presence. Some, however, were not.

A sizable portion were from regional locals and at-large areas and were ignorant of the intensity and bitterness of the organizational machinations to smash political dissidence. Here was a comrade from Grand Rapids who had built the antiwar movement there in the face of all sorts of Stalinist and Maoist oppositional trends. Here was the former organizer of the Kansas local, a dedicated comrade with real potential. There was another from Salt Lake City. So went the roster.

They were all aglow with optimism and dedication. They

would leaflet for hours for the Jenness-Pulley campaign. They were willing to knock themselves for a loop to build the November 6 antiwar demonstrations or the November 20 abortion repeal action. They were, in a word, very naive and politically unsophisticated. Most of them were not very developed theoretically; a few had scarcely passed the cover of *Liberalism, Ultraleftism or Mass Action*. Nor were they hyperactivists. Yet, when they thought the Trotskyist movement needed them there, they were there. Yes, comrades, they may have been raw, but they were dedicated to the cause of revolutionary socialism.

The ensuing weeks saw a progression of such raw cadre enter the Oakland movement, see their illusions about movement democracy shattered before their eyes and drift away from us only to be replaced by others. It's a horror story well worth pushing to the back of our minds. I could name half a dozen comrades in the YSA who dropped away in the few weeks I was there. The organizational victory of the leadership over the former minority comrades in the Oakland branch and local was an expensive one in terms of our limited resources, the cadres—the "corruptable youth" variety as well as the "old cynics." For that, comrades, we will suffer more in the future.

When assigned to the sub team later that fall, I jumped at the chance to leave Oakland. I don't frankly know why I stayed there as long as I did. Perhaps it was a streak of stubbornness that forced me to stay and carry out, at least in the beginning, the part I was expected to play, that of a mindless hack, a mindless hand-raiser, but there was a more powerful force there as well: an utter hatred of the historic injustices perpetrated on our class by the capitalists, their system of social organization and the reflections of that system in the workers movement.

It was this hatred of bureaucratism and heavy-handedness that brought any blind idolatry of the party to an impasse. It further brought me to repent my crimes, to do a patient penance in Houston for nearly a year while awaiting action on my request for party membership, and to write this public confession of my unwilling but no less criminal violation of Bolshevik norms.

Because I have little doubt that there are those who view dissident comrades and regional YSAers (who so completely trust the SWP) as mere cannon-fodder in their factional war against any and all oppositionist currents, I urge the less unwitting and at least equally guilty cadre-killers, I urge them to come clean and make a similar confession to the ranks of our party.

July 24, 1973

DEEP ENTRYISM: ITS RELEVANCE TO THE PRESENT DISCUSSION

by Cliff Conner, Lower Manhattan
Branch, New York Local

Deep entryism, or entryism *sui generis*, is no longer merely a historical question for the Fourth International. On the most immediate level, an evaluation of the past experience of deep entryism is presently on the agenda for a vote at the next world congress. The Draft Theses submitted to the 10th World Congress by the United Secretariat (*The Building of Revolutionary Parties in Capitalist Europe*) include a positive assessment of seventeen years of deep entry work in Europe.

Secondly, some leading supporters of the same document believe that deep entry may not have been "*sui generis*" after all; that is, not necessarily connected solely with a specific *sui generis* historical period that has forever passed. It may, they hold, under certain conditions, be applied as a means of "party building" again in the future.

Thirdly, the Draft Theses on Europe call for employing a method of "party building" in the present that parallels deep entryism in its underlying assumptions. Therefore, the present discussion not only raises deep entryism as a question of relevance to the past of the Fourth International, but also to its future and — most significantly — to its present.

Two Kinds of Entryism

What is entryism? In general, it is the process whereby the revolutionary party dissolves itself as an open, independent organization into another organization, a non-Trotskyist organization, for a period of time.

There is nothing in principle wrong with this; in fact, the entry tactic was first devised by Trotsky himself. Trotsky's concept was that under certain circumstances a revolutionary party could enter another political formation and benefit from it. The idea was to *get in*, win over as many people as possible to the revolutionary socialist program, and *get out*. When the SWP entered Norman Thomas's Socialist Party in the 1930s, the purpose was *not to build* that party (!) but to rip off as many of their members as possible who were potential revolutionaries and then develop them into cadres of the Leninist vanguard party. That was Trotsky's conception of entryism, and it was a *genuine party-building* tactic.

But in the early 1950s, the whole concept of entryism was turned upside down by Michel Pablo. Pablo introduced the idea of "deep" entryism, or entryism *sui generis*, which means entryism "of a unique kind." Instead of a short-term tactic for building Leninist parties, it turned out to be a long-term strategic orientation for *liquidating* parties.

Pablo proposed that the Trotskyists enter the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties, bury their memberships there, and do this for an entire historical period. He *didn't* project deep entry as a means of building independent sections of the Fourth International. His idea was that *left-centrist currents* would develop in the Stalinist and Social Democratic parties that would be, in his words, "adequate instruments" for leading both the radicalization

and the revolution, and he wanted to enter those parties to help develop and influence the left-centrist tendencies (to "win hegemony within" them, so to speak).

Pablo's deep entryism was based on the assumption that World War III was right around the corner, and that it would set off a worldwide revolution. Time was short, and the only hope for Trotskyists to play a role in the imminent showdown was through deep entryism.

That was back in the early 1950s.

Seventeen years later, at the 9th World Congress in 1969, years after it was obvious that the war-revolution theory had been refuted by events and years after Pablo had left the Fourth International, the leaders of the European sections finally announced that the period of their deep entry work had come to an end.*

The Ghost of Sui Generis Past

What were the results of these seventeen years of deep entryism *sui generis*?

The United Secretariat's Draft Theses say that entryism was a "tactic of party building" and that it was "by and large valid during the preceding phase."

I disagree with that assessment. The seventeen years of deep entry did not lead to the construction of revolutionary parties anywhere. Just the opposite! It left European Trotskyism in complete disarray.

Ironically, some of the most devastating critiques of the experience have been made by *supporters* of the United Secretariat's Draft Theses, particularly by Vergeat and Delphin, both members of the United Secretariat; and by Jebrac, a leader of the Ligue Communiste in France. (See: *Preparatory Texts for the 1971 Conference of the Leaderships of the European Sections* by Vergeat and Delphin, IIDB, Vol. 9, No. 5; and *The Axes of the International Debate* by Jebrac IIB, June 1973, No. 3 in 1973.)

Vergeat and Delphin say, ". . . entryism nowhere led in reality to the formation of a left-centrist current of appreciable size. . . ." With regard to the great upsurge of the youth radicalization in the 1960s they charge that "The 'old' sections of the International have experienced a certain paralysis." "The entryist placement of the sections left them outside of this movement."

"In Italy," Vergeat and Delphin continue, "where the deepest kind of entryist work in the CP . . . was carried out for a very long time, the section had the objective of constructing rather important leftist regroupments. . . . These attempts blew up at the very moment they came to a culmination, the militants involved in them either returning to the CP or going over to ultraleftism or Maoism. The new Italian section had to start again with very little after its disintegration."

In Germany, Jebrac writes, "We remained relatively outside the great upsurge in the student movement. . . . That was the logical continuation of entryism. . . . This orientation was stubbornly followed." As a result the German sec-

tion, according to Vergeat and Delphin, was "unable to win the advanced sections of the radicalization" and was "broken up."

"In Belgium," Vergeat and Delphin state, "the worker nuclei gained during [the entryist] period . . . remain imbued with syndicalism and find it rather difficult to grasp the role of a revolutionary party." That is quite a shortcoming for a Leninist cadre. How did this happen? "The Belgian section hung on too long to the centrist perspective." Furthermore, "Only their [the left-centrist groups the Belgian comrades were working in] virtual disappearance obliged the construction of a new section."

What about France? The most avid defenders of deep entryism, such as Pierre Frank, argue that entryism produced the JCR, which provided the basis for the development of the Ligue Communiste, one of the largest sections of the Fourth International today; and that *this one gain alone* justifies the entire seventeen-year history of entryism.

Not so say these young French Trotskyists who were at the head of the JCR and the French student movement during May-June 1968.

"The gains," Jebrac says, were not "due to the particular clearheadedness of the leadership," but "to the political conditions themselves." The break with entryism in France, he adds, "was not so much chosen as forced by the hard-line Stalinist leadership of the French CP."

The turn from entryism in France was made "empirically," "pragmatically." "Up to now," Vergeat and Delphin charge, "empiricism and a sense of smell have guided our work." They continue:

"The French section ha[d] the enormous good fortune of living through the revolutionary crisis in May 1968. This compelled it to give up entryism and to act like free-lancers. . . ." In other words, these young French comrades see the gains in France as resulting from a *break* with deep entry work; a break that took place virtually by accident, or at least without benefit of political leadership.

Vergeat and Delphin give a perceptive description of how deep entry work tends to destroy revolutionary cadres:

"The militants immersed in this work and not burdened with open work on the outside adapted to the milieu, its tempo, its customs, and its routine. The necessity to remain under cover, to confine their political intervention to small doses ended with their giving up the program bit by bit. Some of these comrades were lost in this way, being drawn in by the Stalinist or Social Democratic structures. The fractional work . . . did not educate our militants in mass work or in how to assume responsibility or take the initiative, except in isolated cases. A minority fraction within a mass party does not at all learn how to build an organization and it does not provide the militants with the leadership responsibilities to be found in an independent revolutionary organization; especially in working out programmatic questions."

This is just a small sampling of Jebrac's and Vergeat and Delphin's criticisms of deep entry, but it is sufficient to get the flavor of their assessment.

Now, what conclusion would one expect them to draw from all of this experience? They have shown conclusively that the fruits of deep entry were negative every place it was applied. Believe it or not, Vergeat and Delphin conclude that deep entryism was "a correct tactic often

tried but poorly mastered"!!!

It never worked anywhere, they say, but it was a correct tactic—presumably somewhat like guerrilla warfare in Latin America! That an abstract strategy can be "correct" in spite of an unbroken record of failures in application to the world of material reality is a notion that reeks of idealism.

Differences Within the "Majority"

It is important to note that Vergeat, Delphin, and Jebrac, speaking for a large segment of the new generation of European Trotskyism, are directing their fire at other supporters of the Draft Thesis on Europe who would prefer a much more positive and generous assessment of deep entryism's past history. Pierre Frank is the most prominent spokesperson for the latter tendency of thought within the broader IEC "majority tendency." The most direct statements of the pro-deep-entry viewpoint are in the *Draft Resolution on our Tactics in Europe* that was prepared by the United Secretariat for the (9th World Congress, and in Pierre Frank's report on that draft resolution. [See: International Information Bulletin: Discussion on Europe (1968-1971).]

That draft resolution (not to be confused with the recent Draft Theses) states:

"Taking everything into account, despite the error committed with respect to the conjuncture in 1952-53 [i.e., the war-revolution theory], it was not possible at the time to project any other tactic than entryism. This tactic was justified at the time. Those who stuck to strictly independent activity did not succeed at all in developing numerically during that period. [Who does this refer to? Healy? Lambert? Or the SWP?] If from the beginning we had had a perspective of prolonged economic prosperity, with the enormous difficulties which that entailed for our movement, we would have still followed an entryist tactic. . . . Finally, when entryist work, beginning in 1963-64, proved unproductive, if our organizations . . . did not raise the question of giving up this tactic, it was because practically no other general tactic was available to take its place."

This draft resolution was not only a defense of deep entry, it was a paean to it. Again, the quotations here represent only a sample of the whole. Compare its general conclusion with the contributions by Vergeat et al., quoted earlier: ". . . the entryist tactic is far from having been a failure. On the numerical level, several sections were able to strengthen themselves through it (Belgium, Italy . . .) . . . It was above all on the political level that considerable gains were made through entryism."

Is it any wonder, in light of the dissonance between the above and the evaluations of Vergeat, Delphin, and Jebrac, that in the present Draft Theses the positive assessment of entryism could only be smuggled in by boiling it down to a couple of sentences in an eighteen-page document? But boiled down or not, it is there. Vergeat, Delphin, and Jebrac support this document with the feeble assertion that deep entry was a "correct tactic" that was "poorly applied." In reality, supporters of the IEC "majority" document include holders of two diametrically opposed assessments of deep entryism in an unprincipled combination.

The Ghost of Sui Generis Future

The Pierre Frank wing of the present heterogeneous "majority" in Europe clearly wants to hold the deep-entry "party-building" tactic in reserve for future use. This was unabashedly stated in the earlier *Draft Resolution on our Tactics in Europe* in these words:

"In the old parties [i.e., CPs and SPs] . . . we do not orient at present in accordance with the perspective of the formation of left currents. . . . Nevertheless, we must carefully follow the developments that can occur in the old parties in consequence of transformations of the objective situation and be ready each time to reexamine what may be required in solving the party-building problem. . . ."

The Jebrac and Vergeat-Delphin wings of the "majority" apparently could not accept such a direct posing of a possible return to deep entry, but nonetheless the present Draft Theses have indirectly included vague hints to that effect by (1) assessing entryism *sui generis* as a party-building tactic and calling for "tactical flexibility" in party building ("Tactical flexibility" is a code phrase used repeatedly in the earlier document, and by Pablo two decades ago, to justify deep entry); and by (2) repeatedly qualifying the "tactical" alternatives to deep entry with such phrases as "at present," "in the present stage," and "in the present conditions."

The Ghost of Sui Generis Present

Worst of all, there are ample indications that the primary "tactical" alternative the present Draft Theses call for is not a turn from the fundamental approach of entryism *sui generis*, but is merely a *change of milieus* in which to apply it. That is, instead of seeking left-centrist currents within the old, bureaucratized workers' organizations, the objective now is to seek left-centrist currents elsewhere; *outside* the CPs and SPs.

The Draft Theses try to distinguish between deep entryism and what they call "winning hegemony within the new mass vanguard," which is supposed to be the central "party-building tactic" for the present period. But neither of these are tactics of party building; both are attempts to find shortcuts to creating a mass revolutionary organization through political adaptationism. The identity of method is underscored by the document's identity of terminology when it says that the deep entry work of

the 1950s was carried out in search of the "new mass vanguard" of that period that was supposed to be in the CPs and SPs:

"The entryist tactic for building a revolutionary party proceeded from the hypothesis that the process of radicalization—of forming a new mass vanguard—was taking place for the most part within the traditional mass organizations."

The old new mass vanguard is dead; long live the *new new mass vanguard!* But please note that the "old" new mass vanguard was never found to exist in the real political world.

A key feature of deep entryism in the old days was that if no left-centrist milieus existed for Trotskyists to work in, then Trotskyists were supposed to create them from scratch. Joseph Hansen, in *In Defense of the Leninist Strategy of Party Building*, points out that this is precisely the same approach that was used in constructing the circles around the *Red Mole* newspaper in Great Britain a couple of years ago.

And the Draft Theses on Europe project more of the same; they speak of: "increasing opportunities for members or sympathizers of revolutionary-Marxist organizations to win positions of leadership in youth organizations that are *not specifically revolutionary and even to create such organizations. . . .*" (Emphasis added.)

Comrade Ernest Germain assures us that "party building" is not an issue in the present discussion—that it is no more than a "useless red herring"—but it has become painfully obvious that it is the central issue. By calling on the Fourth International to approve of entryism *sui generis* as a legitimate party-building tactic, the United Secretariat majority asks us to approve a *strategy* that historically came close to destroying the cadres of the Fourth International in Europe. And by advancing a parallel strategy for capturing a so-called new mass vanguard, they are again pointing away from party building in search of a substitute for a Leninist vanguard party.

* Ernest Germain, in his *In Defence of Leninism: In Defence of the Fourth International*, attempts to minimize the question of the historical assessment of deep entryism by referring to it as "postwar entryism (twenty years ago!)." While the policy was initiated over two decades ago, the leaders of European Trotskyism only terminated it, officially at least, four years ago, in 1969.

July 23, 1973

A CONTRIBUTION ON THE RADICALIZATION OF THE '30s

by Tim Brooks, Oakland-Berkeley Branch

In the July 16, 1973, *Intercontinental Press* there is an interview with Comrade Cannon entitled, "The Radicalization Then and Now," in which Cannon spends some time on the relationship of forces between the Communist Party and our movement during the radicalization of the 1930s.

The purpose of this contribution is to give some additional facts on the subject, some of which may be known to older comrades, especially those who were involved in the movement of the '30s, but which I think will be interesting to younger comrades.

The Communist Party of the '30s was the strongest working-class tendency that ever existed in the United States. In 1934 they had their 8th convention. This is the year that Cannon describes as the year the "workers started stirring and organizing." Already by the 8th convention the membership figures of the CP were astounding. The organizational report from this convention, which can be found in the May 1934 issue of the *Communist International*,* reports that the Stalinists had a membership of over 24,000, 90 percent of whom were paid up in dues. Compare that to the membership in 1930, the time of the 7th convention, when they had 7,500 members with only 70 percent paid up in dues. These statistics are revealing when you think that the CP more than tripled their membership in the period just before the working class began to move full swing into the radicalization of the '30s.

Who were they recruiting, and where from? To answer this question we can take a look at the figures from the recruitment drive completed just prior to the '34 convention. This drive netted over 7,000 new recruits, not from the intellectual circles or from the campuses. Almost the entire 7,000 were proletarian, 92 percent to be exact. 13 percent were Black, 17 percent were women, 38 percent were employed workers, 27 percent were in trade unions, and 19 percent were employed in basic industry. That last figure represents over half of the employed workers.

While at the same time the Trotskyist movement had about 150 people across the country.

However, we never have and we still don't determine the relationship of forces by the numbers of any particular organization. The decisive thing for us in judging the viability of a party is its ability to intervene in and effect the mass movements, and in the 1930s the CP definitely had this ability. Even though they sold the struggle out at every chance they had, and choked the progression of the movement, workers still gravitated towards them. One of the most important reasons for this was the fact that the CP was the representative of the Moscow government in the U. S. and radicals who supported the Russian revolution looked to the CPUSA for political leadership.

Cannon outlines some of the other reasons in his *IP* interview:

"They grew on what radicalism there was. They got the benefit of it. I would say they were growing—I haven't got the exact figures—from the beginning of the depres-

sion. Because they were the only ones around of any consequence and size. They had a daily paper. And they had daily papers in a dozen different languages. And they had district organizers and full-time organizers in all the main cities. They had an editorial and writers. And they got the benefit of everything. For example, one of the manifestations of radicalism ahead of the workers radicalization was the radicalization of the intellectuals. They pounced on that. They organized John Reed clubs, which were organizations of intellectuals, supposedly.

"And they were very adept in organizing the peripheral organizations to meet the needs of special people, like the John Reed clubs. They were a natural center for intellectuals who were beginning to dissent. And they had their unemployment leagues for the unemployed workers. They organized the League Against War and Fascism, in which they tried to integrate an indiscriminate mass of people who didn't want a war, or fascism either. This was just after Hitler had come to power. Up to then they had had an ultra-left policy in the unions and in general."

In 1933, when they saw the start of motion in the class, they pounced on that too. They played a leading role in organizing the West Coast dockworkers into the AFL. This in large part was responsible for their ability to intervene in and play a leading role in the 1934 strike.

The West Coast maritime strike was part of the first wave of successful strikes that spurred the class into action and the CP was there in full force. They had the *Western Worker*,** which was devoted almost entirely to the strike and the election campaign being run by the CP at the time.

The Longshore strike eventually sparked a San Francisco-wide general strike which also remained under the influence of the CP and was eventually won.

In a report on the strike published in the *Communist International*, the CP talks about the degree to which it was able to affect the strike:

"The influence of the party among the strikers was so great that the San Francisco strike committee decided to make the *Western Worker* their official strike organ."

The Stalinists made a great number of gains out of the maritime strike; besides the large numbers of workers they recruited they gained a great deal of prestige in the eyes of the radicalizing class.

All through the '30s the CP did similar work in unions all across the country. They had their people everywhere, in all the key places. The unions weren't the only place they did work either.

In the 1930s there was a situation where over half the work force was unemployed and work in this sector was very important also.

The CP had large numbers of trained, experienced cadres in the unemployment leagues which organized mass demonstrations demanding relief. These formations were also active in supporting the union movement and prevented a lot of scabbing. The unemployment movement was even more widespread than the union movement and the Stalinists had control over much of it.

Another thing that the CP had in the '30s and that we lacked was a youth organization. The Stalinists had the Young Communist Leagues which existed on a mass scale and played a key role in both the workers movement and on the campuses. Again, Cannon in the *IP*:

"You see, the Stalinists had been very active on the campuses and they had strong student organizations, built around the slogans of anti-war and anti-fascism.

"This is interesting from the point of view of where you get your cadres and what you do with them. You get your cadres from where you can and then you put them where they are most needed.

"I don't think this was the design of any Stalinist genius; it just happened. They recruited hundreds and hundreds, perhaps thousands of college students into the Young Communist League. And they had a broader organization, students against war or some such thing—something like the Student Mobilization Committee."

In a speech given to the 7th World Congress of the Third International, Gil Green goes over the work of the YCL in the U. S. Their approach towards what he termed non-proletarian youth, and the importance of campus work which was responsible for the leadership role of the YCL in the April 12, 1934, student strike. Here's how Green describes it:

"In the past years our Young Communist League has radically broken with its previous sectarian approach towards the middle class youth, especially the student youth. Only this has made possible the development of such powerful student actions as the April 12 student strike against war and fascism, on which day 184,000 students walked out of their classrooms at one given moment, in the greatest demonstration of youth solidarity ever witnessed in our country."

He goes on to explain how work with students is so important.

Throughout this whole period of Stalinist predominance, the Trotskyist movement was still very small, from 100 to 150 members, and for the last five years, since 1928, we had been focusing our main attention on the Communist Party. And correctly so, because that was where we could get what we needed—experienced cadres. But in 1933 our first test came and we intervened in the Minneapolis strikes. This was our first opportunity for mass work and we made the most of it.

We went to Minneapolis not because we thought it was the most important struggle in the labor movement, but because, as Cannon says, "the door was open for us there."

The struggles of the '30s never progressed past the trade-union movement due to the counterrevolutionary policy of the Communist Party.

I would just like to conclude with one final quote from the Cannon interview that I think capsulizes this point very well:

"The Communist party was the decisive force in strangling the political radicalization of the thirties, I personally think that *all things were possible in the late thirties*. If the Communist party, which was then very strong—probably eighty to a hundred thousand members, and had its cadres everywhere—had been a revolutionary party, nobody knows what might have happened."

* The *Communist International* was the theoretical organ of the CP at the time.

** The *Western Worker* was the weekly organ of the CP on the West Coast.

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